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The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.

CHAPTER LXVI.

SEDLEY'S NOTES.



JULIA found herself unable to come down to dinner, and Mr. Sedley had to confess that he had overtaxed her strength and imposed too far upon her zeal. "To tell truth," added he, "I forgot she was not a colleague. So shrewd and purpose-like were all her remarks, such aptitude she displayed in rejecting what was valueless, and such acuteness in retaining all that was really important, it went clean out of my head that I was not dealing with a brother of the craft, instead of a very charming and beautiful young lady."

"And you really have fallen upon papers of importance?" asked Nelly, eagerly; for Julia had already, in answer to the same question, said,

"Mr. Sedley has pledged me to silence."

"Of the last importance, Miss Bramleigh." He paused for an instant, and then added, "I am well aware that I see nothing but friends, almost members of one family, around this table, but the habits of my calling impose reserve, and, besides, I am unwilling to make revelations until, by certain inquiries, I can affirm that they may be relied on."

"Oh, Mr. Sedley, if you have a gleam, even a gleam of hope, do give it us. Don't you think our long-suffering and patience have made us worthy of it?"

"Stop, Nelly," cried Augustus, "I will have no appeals of this kind. Mr. Sedley knows our anxieties, and if he does not yield to them he has his own good reasons."

"I don't see that," broke in Jack. "We are not asking to hear our neighbour's secrets, and I take it we are of an age to be entrusted with our own."

"You speak sharply, sir," said Sedley, "but you speak well. I would only observe that the most careful and cautious people have been known to write letters, very confidential letters, which somehow get bruited about, so that clues are discovered and inferences traced which not unfrequently have given the most serious difficulties to those engaged in inquiry."

"Have no fears on that score, Mr. Sedley," said Jack; "there are not four people in Europe at this moment with fewer correspondents. I believe I might say that the roof of this house covers our whole world."

"Jack is right there," added Augustus. "If we don't write to *The Times* or the *Post*, I don't see to whom we are to tell our news."

"George hasn't even a pulpit here to expound us from," cried Jack, laughingly.

"You have an undoubted right to know what is strictly your own concern. The only question is, shall I be best consulting your interests by telling it?"

"Out with it, by all means," said Jack. "The servants have left the room now, and here we are in close committee."

Sedley looked towards Augustus, who replied by a gesture of assent; and the lawyer, taking his spectacles from his pocket, said, "I shall simply read you the entry of my note-book. Much of it will surprise and much more gratify you; but let me entreat that if you have any doubts to resolve or questions to put you will reserve them till I have finished. I will only say that for everything I shall state as fact there appears to me to be abundant proofs, and where I mention what is simply conjecture I will say so. You remember my condition, then? I am not to be interrupted."

"Agreed," cried Jack, as though replying for the most probable defaulter. "I'll not utter a word, and the others are all discretion."

"The case is this," said Sedley. "Montagu Bramleigh, of Cossenden Manor, married Enrichetta, daughter of Giacomo Lami, the painter. The marriage was celebrated at the village church of Portshandon, and duly registered. They separated soon after—she retiring to Holland with her father, who had compromised himself in the Irish rebellion of '98. A son was born to this marriage, christened and registered in the Protestant church at Louvain as Godfrey Lami Bramleigh. To his christening Bramleigh was entreated to come, but under various pretexts

he excused himself, and sent a costly present for the occasion ; his letters, however, breathed nothing but affection, and fully recognized the boy as his son and his heir. Captain Bramleigh is, I know, impatient at the length of these details, but I can't help it. Indignant at the treatment of his daughter, Lami sent back the gift with a letter of insulting meaning. Several letters were interchanged of anger and recrimination ; and Enrichetta, whose health had long been failing, sunk under the suffering of her desertion and died. Lami left Holland, and repaired to Germany, carrying the child with him. He was also accompanied by a younger daughter, Carlotta, who, at the time I refer to, might have been sixteen or seventeen years of age. Lami held no intercourse with Bramleigh from this date, nor, so far as we know, did Bramleigh take measures to learn about the child—how he grew up, or where he was. Amongst the intimates of Lami's family was a man whose name is not unfamiliar to newspaper readers of some thirty or forty years back—a man who had figured in various conspiracies, and contrived to escape scatheless, where his associates had paid the last penalty of their crimes. This man became the suitor of Carlotta, and won her affections, although Giacomo neither liked nor trusted Niccolo Baldassare—

"Stop there," cried Jack, rising, and leaning eagerly across the table ; "say that name again."

"Niccolo Baldassare."

"My old companion—my comrade at the galleys," exclaimed Jack ; "we were locked to each other, wrist and ankle, for eight months."

"He lives then ?"

"I should think he does ; the old beggar is as stout and hale as any one here. I can't guess his age, but I'll answer for his vigour."

"This will be all important hereafter," said Sedley, making a note.

"Now to my narrative. From Lami, Baldassare learned the story of Enrichetta's unhappy marriage and death, and heard how the child, then a playful little boy of three years or so, was the rightful heir of a vast fortune,—a claim the grandfather firmly resolved to prosecute at some future day. The hope was, however, not destined to sustain him, for the boy caught a fever and died. His burial-place is mentioned, and his age, four years."

"So that," cried Augustus, "the claim became extinct with him ?"

"Of course ; for though Montagu Bramleigh remarried, it was not till six years after his first wife's death."

"And our rights are unassailable ?" cried Nelly, wildly.

"Your estates are safe ; at least, they will be safe."

"And who is Pracontal de Bramleigh ?" asked Jack.

"I will tell you. Baldassare succeeded in winning Carlotta's heart, and persuaded her to elope with him. She did so, carrying with her all the presents Bramleigh had formerly given to her sister—some rings of great price, and an old watch with the Bramleigh arms in brilliants, among the number. But these were not all : she also took the letters and

documents that established her marriage, and a copy of the registration. I must hasten on, for I see impatience on every side. He broke the heart of this poor girl, who died, and was buried with her little boy in the same grave, leaving old Lami desolate and childless. By another marriage, and by a wife still living, Marie Pracontal, Baldassare had a son; and he bethought him, armed as he was with papers and documents, to prefer the claim to the Bramleigh estates for this youth; and had even the audacity to ask Lami's assistance to the fraud, and to threaten him with his vengeance if he betrayed him.

"So perfectly propped was the pretension by circumstances of actual events—Niccolo knew everything—that Bramleigh not only sent several sums of money to stifle the demand, but actually despatched a confidential person abroad to see the claimant, and make some compromise with him; for it is abundantly evident that Montagu Bramleigh only dreaded the scandal and the *éclat* such a story would create, and had no fears for the title to his estates, he all along believing that there were circumstances in the marriage with Enrichetta which would show it to be illegal, and the issue consequently illegitimate."

"I must say, I think our respected grandfather," said Augustus, gravely, "does not figure handsomely in this story."

"With the single exception of old Lami," cried Jack, "they were a set of rascals—every man of them."

"And is this the way you speak of your dear friend Niccolo Baldassare?" asked Nelly.

"He was a capital fellow at the galleys; but I suspect he'd prove a very shady acquaintance in more correct company."

"And, Mr. Sedley, do you really say that all this can be proven?" cried Nelly. "Do you believe it all yourself?"

"Every word of it. I shall test most of it within a few days. I have already telegraphed to London for one of the clever investigators of registries and records. I have ample means of tracing most of the events I need. These papers of old Lami's are full of small details; they form a closer biography than most men leave behind them."

"There was, however, a marriage of my grandfather with Enrichetta Lami?" asked Augustus.

"We give them that," cried the lawyer, who fancied himself already instructing counsel. "We contest nothing,—notice, registry, witnesses, all are as legal as they could wish. The girl was Mrs. Bramleigh, and her son Montagu Bramleigh's heir; death, however, carried away both, and the claim fell with them. That these people will risk a trial now is more than I can believe; but if they should, we will be prepared for them. They shall be indicted before they leave the court, and Count Pracontal de Bramleigh be put in the dock for forgery."

"No such thing, Sedley," broke in Bramleigh, with an energy very rare with him. "I am well inclined to believe that this young man was no party to the fraud—he has been duped throughout; nor can

I forget the handsome terms he extended to us when our fortune looked darkest."

"A generosity on which late events have thrown a very ugly light," muttered Sedley.

"My brother is right. I'll be sworn he is," cried Jack. "We should be utterly unworthy of the good luck that has befallen us, if the first use we made of it was to crush another."

"If *your* doctrines were to prevail, sir, it would be a very puzzling world to live in," said Sedley, sharply.

"We'd manage to get on with fewer lawyers, anyway."

"Mr. Sedley," said Nelly, mildly, "we are all too happy and too gratified for this unlooked-for deliverance to have a thought for what is to cause suffering anywhere. Let us, I entreat you, have the full enjoyment of this great happiness."

"Then we are probably to include the notable Mr. Cutbill in this act of indemnity?" said Sedley, sneeringly.

"I should think we would, sir," replied Jack. "Without the notable Mr. Cutbill's aid we should never have chanced on those papers you have just quoted to us."

"Has he been housebreaking again?" asked Sedley, with a grin.

"I protest," interposed Bramleigh, "if the good fairy who has been so beneficent to us were only to see us sparring and wrangling in this fashion, she might well think fit to withdraw her gift."

"Oh, here's Julia," cried Nelly; "and all will go right now."

"Well," said Julia, "has any one moved the thanks of the house to Mr. Sedley? for if not, I'm quite ready to do it. I have my speech prepared."

"Move! move!" cried several together.

"I first intend to have a little dinner," said she; "but I have ordered it in the small dining-room; and you are perfectly welcome, any or all of you, to keep me company, if you like."

To follow the conversation that ensued would be little more than again to go over a story which we feel has been already impressed with tiresome reiteration on the reader. Whatever had failed in Sedley's narrative, Julia's ready wit and quick intelligence had supplied by conjecture, and they talked on till late into the night, bright gleams of future projects shooting like meteors across the placid heaven of their enjoyment, and making all bright around them.

Before they parted it was arranged that each should take his separate share of the inquiry, for there were registries to be searched, dates confirmed in several places; and while L'Estrange was to set out for Louvain, and Jack for Savoy, Sedley himself took charge of the weightier question to discover St. Michel, and prove the burial of Godfrey Bramleigh.

CHAPTER LXVII.

A WAYFARER.

WHEN the time came for the several members of the family at the villa to set out on the search after evidence, Jack, whose reluctance to leave home—he called it “home”—increased with every day, induced Cutbill to go in his stead, a change which even Mr. Sedley himself was forced to admit was not detrimental to the public service.

Cutbill's mission was to Aix, in Savoy, to see and confer with Marie Pracontal, the first wife of Baldassare. He arrived in the nick of time, for only on that same morning had Baldassare himself entered the town, in his galley-slave uniform, to claim his wife and ask recognition amongst his fellow-townsmen. The house where she lived was besieged by a crowd, all more or less eager in asserting the woman's cause, and denouncing the pretensions of a fellow covered with crimes, and pronounced dead to all civil rights. Amid execrations and insults, with threats of even worse, Baldassare stood on a chair in the street, in the act of addressing the multitude, as Cutbill drew nigh. The imperturbable self-possession, the cool courage of the man—who dared to brave public opinion in this fashion and demand a hearing for what in reality was nothing but a deliberate insult to the people around him whose lives he knew, and whose various social derelictions he was all familiar with,—was positively astounding. “I have often thought of you, good people,” said he, “while at the galleys; and I made a vow to myself that the first act of my escape, if ever I should escape, should be to visit this place and thank you for every great lesson I have learned in life. It was here, in this place, I committed my first theft; it was yonder in that church I first essayed sacrilege. It was you, amiable and gentle people, who gave me four associates who betrayed each other, and who died on the drop or by the guillotine, with a courage worthy of Aix; and it was from you I received that pearl of wives who is now married to a third husband and denies the decent rights of hospitality to her first.”

This outrage was now unbearable; a rush was made at him, and he fell amongst the crowd, who had torn him limb from limb but for the intervention of the police, who were driven to defend him with fixed bayonets. “A warm reception I must say,” cried the fellow, as they led him away bleeding and bruised to the gaol.

It was not a difficult task for Cutbill to obtain from Marie Pracontal the details he sought for. Smarting under the insults and scandal she had been exposed to on the day before, she revealed everything, and signed in due form a *procès verbal* drawn up by a notary of the place, of her marriage with Baldassare, the birth of her son Anatole, with the dates of his birth and baptism, and gave up besides some letters which he had written while at the naval school of Genoa. What became of him afterwards she knew not, nor indeed seemed to care. The cruelties of the father had

poisoned her mind against the son, and she showed no interest in his fate and wished not to hear of him.

Cutbill left Aix on the third day, and was slowly strolling up the Mont Cenis pass in front of his horses, when he overtook the very galley-slave he had seen addressing the crowd at Aix. "I thought they had sent you over the frontier into France, my friend," said Cutbill, accosting him like an old acquaintance.

"So they did, but I gave them the slip at Culoz, and doubled back. I have business at Rome, and couldn't endure that round-about way by Marseilles."

"Will you smoke? may I offer you a cigar?"

"My best thanks," said he, touching his cap politely. "They smashed my pipe, those good people down there; like all villagers they resent free speech, but they'd have learned something had they listened to me."

"Perhaps your frankness was excessive."

"Ha! you were there, then? Well, it was what Diderot calls self-sacrificing sincerity; but all men who travel much and mix with varied classes of mankind, fall into this habit. In becoming cosmopolitan you lose in politeness."

"Signor Baldassare, your conversation interests me much. Will you accept a seat in my carriage over the mountain, and give me the benefit of your society?"

"It is I that am honoured, sir," said he, removing his cap, and bowing low. "There is nothing so distinctively well-bred as the courtesy of a man in *your* condition to one in *mine*."

"But you are no stranger to me."

"Indeed! I remarked you called me by my name; but I'm not aware that you know more of me."

"I can afford to rival your own candour, and confess I know a great deal about you."

"Then you have read a very chequered page, sir. What an admirable cigar. You import these, I'd wager?"

"No; but it comes to the same. I buy them in bond and pay the duty."

"Yours is the only country to live in, sir. It has been the dream of my life to pass my last days in England."

"Why not do so? I can't imagine that Aix will prefer any strong claims in preference."

"No, I don't care for Aix, though it is pretty, and I have passed some days of happy tranquillity on that little Lac de Bourges; but to return: to what fortunate circumstance am I indebted for the knowledge you possess of my biography?"

"You have been a very interesting subject to me for some time back. First of all, I ought to say, that I enjoy the pleasure of your son's acquaintance."

"A charming young man, I am told," said he, puffing out a long column of smoke.

"And without flattery, I repeat it—a charming young man, good-looking, accomplished, high-spirited and brave."

"You delight me, sir. What a misfortune for the poor fellow that his antecedents have not been more favourable; but you see, Mr. ——"

"Cutbill is my name."

"Mr. Cutbill, you see that I have not only had a great many irons in the fire through life, but occasionally it has happened to me that I took hold of them by the hot ends."

"And burned your fingers?"

"And burned my fingers."

They walked on some steps in silence, when Baldassare said,—

"Where, may I ask, did you last see my son?"

"I saw him last in Ireland about four months ago. We travelled over together from England, and I visited a place called Castello in his company, the seat of the Bramleigh family."

"Then you know his object in having gone there? You know who he is, what he represents, what he claims?"

"I know the whole story by heart."

"Will you favour me with your version of it?"

"With pleasure; but here is the carriage, let us get in, for the narrative is somewhat long and complicated."

"Before you begin, sir, one question: where is my son now? is he at Rome?"

"He is; he arrived there on Tuesday last."

"That is enough—excuse my interrupting—I am now at your orders."

The reader will readily excuse me if I do not follow Mr. Cutbill in his story, which he told at full length, and with what showed a perfect knowledge of all the circumstances. It is true he was so far disingenuous that he did not confess the claim had ever created alarm to the minds of the Bramleighs. There were certain difficulties he admitted, and no small expense incurred in obtaining information abroad, and proving, as it was distinctly proved, that no issue of Montagu Bramleigh had survived, and that the pretensions of Pracontal were totally groundless.

"And your visit to Savoy was on this very business?" asked Baldassare?

"You are right; a small detail was wanting which I was able to supply."

"And how does Anatole bear the discovery?"

"He has not heard of it; he is at Rome, paying court to an English lady of rank to whom he hopes to be married."

"And how will he bear it; in what spirit will he meet the blow?"

"From what I have seen of him, I'd say he'd stand up nobly under misfortune, and not less so here, that I know he firmly believed in his right; he was no party to the fraud."

"These frauds, as you call them, succeed every day, and when they occur in high places we have more courteous names to call them by. What say you to the empire in France?"

"I'll not discuss that question with you; it takes too wide a range."

"Anatole must bethink him of some other livelihood now, that's clear. I mean to tell him so."

"You intend to see him—to speak with him?"

"What, sir, do you doubt it? Is it that because my wife rejects me that I am to be lost to the ties of parental affection?" He said this with a coarse and undisguised mockery, and then, suddenly changing to a tone of earnestness, added,—*"We shall have to link our fortunes now, and there are not many men who can give an adventurer such counsels as I can."*

"From what I know of the Bramleighs, they would willingly befriend him if they knew how, or in what way to do it."

"Nothing easier. All men's professions can be brought to an easy test—so long as money exists."

"Let me know where to write to you, and I will see what can be done."

"Or, rather, let *me* have *your* address, for my whereabouts is somewhat uncertain."

Cutbill wrote his name and Cattaro on a slip of paper, and the old fellow smiled grimly, and said,—*"Ah! that was your clue then to this discovery. I knew Giacomo died there, but it was a most unlikely spot to track him to. Nothing but chance, the merest chance, could have led to it?"*

This he said interrogatively; but Cutbill made no reply.

"You don't care to imitate *my* frankness, sir; and I am not surprised at it. It is only a fellow who has worn rags for years that doesn't fear nakedness. Is my son travelling alone, or has he a companion?"

"He had a companion some short time back; but I do not know if they are together now."

"I shall learn all that at Rome."

"And have you no fears to be seen there? Will the authorities not meddle with you?"

"Far from it. It is the one state in Europe where men like myself enjoy liberty. They often need us—they fear us always."

Cutbill was silent for some time. He seemed like one revolving some project in his mind, but unable to decide on what he should do. At last he said,—

"You remember a young Englishman who made his escape from Ischia last June?"

"To be sure I do—my comrade."

"You will be astonished to know he was a Bramleigh, a brother of the owner of the estate."

"It was so like my luck to have trusted him," said the other, bitterly.

"You are wrong there. He was always your friend—he is so at this moment. I've heard him talk of you with great kindness."

A careless shrug of the shoulders was the reply.

"Tell him from me," said he, with a savage grin, "that Onofrio—don't forget the name—Onofrio is dead. We threw him over the cliff the night we broke the gaol. There, let me write it for you," said he, taking the pencil from Cutbill's hand, and writing the word Onofrio in a large bold character.

"Keep that pencil-case, will you, as a souvenir?" said Cutbill.

"Give me ten francs instead, and I'll remember you when I pay for my dinner," said he, with a grating laugh; and he took the handful of loose silver Cutbill offered him, and thrust it into his pocket. "Isn't that Souza we see in the valley there? Yes; I remember it well. I'll go no further with you—there's a police-station where I had trouble once. I'll take the cross path here that leads down to the Pinarola road. I thank you heartily. I wanted a little good-nature much when you overtook me. Good-by."

He leaped from the carriage as he spoke, and crossing the little embankment of the road, descended a steep slope, and was out of sight almost in an instant.

CHAPTER LXVIII

A MEETING AND A PARTING.

IN the same room where Pracontal and Longworth had parted in anger, the two men, reconciled and once more friends, sat over their dessert and a cigar. The handsome reparation Pracontal had offered in a letter had been frankly and generously met, and it is probable that their friendship was only the more strongly ratified by the incident.

They were both dressed with unusual care, for Lady Augusta "received" a few intimate friends on that evening, and Pracontal was to be presented to them in his quality of accepted suitor.

"I think," said Longworth, laughingly, "it is the sort of ordeal most Englishmen would feel very awkward in. You are trotted out for the inspection of a critical public, who are to declare what they think of your eyes and your whiskers, if they augur well of your temper, and whether, on the whole, you are the sort of person to whom a woman might confide her fate and future."

"You talk as if I were to be sent before a jury and risk a sentence," said Pracontal, with a slight irritation in his tone.

"It is something very like it."

"And I say, there is no resemblance whatever."

"Don't you remember what Lord Byron in one of his letters says of a memorable drive through Ravenna one evening, where he was presented as the accepted? There's that hang-dog rascal that followed us through the

gardens of the Vatican this morning, there he is again, sitting directly in front of our window, and staring at us."

"Well, I take it, those benches were placed there for fellows to rest on who had few arm-chairs at home."

"I don't think, in all my experience of humanity, I ever saw a face that revolted me more. He isn't ugly, but there is something in the expression so intensely wicked, that mockery of all goodness, that Retsch puts into Mephistopheles; it actually thrills me."

"I don't see that,—there is even drollery in the mouth."

"Yes, diabolic humour, certainly. Did you see that?"

"See what?"

"Didn't you see that when I lifted my glass to my lips, he made a pantomime of drinking too, and bowed to me, as though in salutation?"

"I knew there was fun in the fellow. Let us call him over and speak to him."

"No, no, Pracontal; do not, I beseech you. I feel an aversion towards him that I cannot explain. The rascal poisons the very claret I'm drinking just by glancing at me."

"You are seldom so whimsical."

"Wouldn't you say the fellow knew we were talking of him; see, he is smiling now; if that infernal grin can be called a smile."

"I declare, I will have him over here; now don't go, sit down like a good fellow; there's no man understands character better than yourself, and I am positively curious to see how you will read this man on a closer inspection."

"He does not interest, he merely disgusts me."

Pracontal arose, drew high the window, and waved his napkin in sign to the man, who at once got up from his seat, and slowly, and half indolently, came over to the window. He was dressed in a sort of grey uniform of jacket and trousers, and wore a kerchief on his head for a cap, a costume which certainly in no degree contributed to lessen the unfavourable impression his face imparted, for there was in his look a mixture of furtiveness and ferocity positively appalling.

"Do you like him better now?" asked Longworth, in English.

And the fellow grinned at the words.

"You understand English, eh?" asked Pracontal.

"Ay, I know most modern languages."

"What nation are you?"

"A Savoyard."

"Whence do you come now?"

"From the galleys at Ischia."

"Frank that, anyhow," cried Longworth. "Were you under sentence there?"

"Yes, for life."

"For what offence?"

"For a score that I committed, and twice as many that I failed in."

"Murder, assassination?"

He nodded.

"Let us hear about some of them," said Pracontal, with interest.

"I don't talk of these things, they are bygones, and I'd as soon forget them."

"And do you fancy they'll be forgotten up there?" said Pracontal, pointing upward as he spoke.

"What do you know about 'up there'?" said he sternly, "more than myself? Are not your vague words 'up there' the proof that it's as much a mystery to you as to me?"

"Don't get into theology with him, or you'll have to listen to more blasphemy than you bargain for," whispered Longworth; and whether the fellow overheard or merely guessed the meaning of the words, he grinned diabolically, and said,—

"Yes, leave that question there."

"Are you not afraid of the police, my friend?" asked Longworth. "Is it not in their power to send you back to those you have escaped from?"

"They might with another, but the Cardinal Secretary knows me. I have told him I have some business to do at Rome, and want only a day or two to do it, and he knows I will keep my word."

"My faith, you are a very conscientious galley-slave!" cried Pracontal. "Are you hungry?" and he took a large piece of bread from the side-board and handed it to him. The man bowed, took the bread, and laid it beside him on the window-board.

"And so you and Antonelli are good friends?" said Longworth sneeringly.

"I did not say so. I only said he knew me, and knew me to be a man of my word."

"And how could a Cardinal know——?" when he got thus far he felt the unfairness of saying what he was about to utter, and stopped, but the man took up the words with perfect calmness, and said:—

"The best and the purest people in this world will now and then have to deal with the lowest and the worst, just as men will drink dirty water when they are parched with thirst."

"Is it some outlying debt of vengeance, an old vendetta, detains you here?" asked Longworth.

"I wouldn't call it that," replied he slowly, "but I'd not be surprised if it took something of that shape, after all."

"And do you know any other great folk?" asked Pracontal, with a laugh. "Are you acquainted with the Pope?"

"No, I have never spoken to him. I know the French envoy here, the Marquis de Caderousse. I know Field-Marshal Kleinkoff. I know Brassieri—the Italian spy—they call him the Duke of Brassieri."

"That is to say, you have seen them as they drove by on the Corso, or walked on the Pincian?" said Longworth.

"No, that would not be acquaintance. When I said 'know' I meant it."

"Just as you know my friend here, and know *me* perhaps?" said Pracontal.

"Not only him, but *you*," said the fellow with a fierce determination.

"*Me*, know me? what do you know about *me*?"

"Everything," and now he drew himself up, and stared at him defiantly.

"I declare I wonder at you, Anatole," whispered Longworth. "Don't you know the game of menace and insolence these rascals play at?" and again the fellow seemed to divine what passed, for he said:—

"Your friend is wrong this time. I am not the cheat he thinks me."

"Tell me something you know about me," said Pracontal, smiling; and he filled a goblet with wine, and handed it to him.

The other, however, made a gesture of refusal, and coldly said,—

"What shall it be about? I'll answer any question you put to me."

"What is he about to do?" cried Longworth. "What great step in life is he on the eve of taking?"

"Oh, I'm not a fortune-teller," said the man, roughly; "though I could tell you that he's not to be married to this rich Englishwoman. That fine bubble is burst already."

Pracontal tried to laugh, but he could not; and it was with difficulty he could thunder out,—"*Servants' stories and lacqueys' talk!*"

"No such thing, sir. I deal as little with these people as yourself. You seem to think me an impostor; but I tell you I am less of a cheat than either of you. Ay, sir, than you, who play fine gentleman, *mi lordo*, here in Italy, but whose father was a land-steward; or than you——"

"What of me—what of *me*?" cried Pracontal, whose intense eagerness now mastered every other emotion.

"You! who cannot tell who or what you are, who have a dozen names, and no right to any of them; and who, though you have your initials burned in gunpowder in the bend of your arm, have no other baptismal registry. Ah! do I know you now?" cried he, as Pracontal sank upon a seat, covered with a cold sweat and fainting.

"This is some rascally trick. It is some private act of hate. Keep him in talk till I fetch a gendarme." Longworth whispered this, and left the room.

"Bad counsel that he has given you," said the man. "*My* advice is better. Get away from this at once—get away before he returns. There's only shame and disgrace before you now."

He moved over to where Pracontal was seated, and placing his mouth close to his ear, whispered some words slowly and deliberately.

"And are you Niccolo Baldassare?" muttered Pracontal.

"Come with me, and learn all," said the man, moving to the door; "for I will not wait to be arrested and made a town talk."

Pracontal arose and followed him.

The old man walked with a firm and rapid step. He descended the stairs that led to the Piazza del Popolo, crossed the wide piazza, and issued from the gate out upon the Campagna, and skirting the ancient wall, was soon lost to view among the straggling hovels which cluster at intervals beneath the ramparts. Pracontal continued to walk behind him, his head sunk on his bosom, and his steps listless and uncertain, like one walking in sleep. Neither were seen more after that night.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE LAST OF ALL.

ALL the emissaries had returned to the villa except Sedley, who found himself obliged to revisit England suddenly, but from whom came a few lines of telegram, stating that the "case of Pracontal de Bramleigh v. Bramleigh had been struck out of the cause list; Kelson a heavy loser, having made large advances to plaintiff."

"Wasn't it like the old fox to add this about his colleague? As if any of us cared about Kelson, or thought of him!"

"Good fortune is very selfish, I really believe," said Nelly. "We have done nothing but talk of ourselves, our interests, and our intentions for the last four days, and the worst of it is, we don't seem tired of doing so yet."

"It would be a niggardly thing to deny us that pleasure, seeing what we have passed through to reach it," cried Jack.

"Who'll write to Marion with the news?" said Augustus.

"Not I," said Jack; "or if I do it will be to sign myself 'late Sam Rogers.'"

"If George accepts the embassy chaplaincy," said Julia, "he can convey the tidings by word of mouth."

"To guess by his dreary face," said Jack, "one would say he had really closed with that proposal. What's the matter, old fellow; has the general joy here not warmed your heart?"

L'Estrange, pale and red alternately, blundered out a few scarcely coherent words; and Julia, who well knew what feelings were agitating him, and how the hopes that adversity had favoured might be dashed, now that a brighter fortune had dawned, came quickly to his rescue, and said, "I see what George is thinking of. George is wondering when we shall all be as happy and as united again, as we have been here, under this dear old roof."

"But why should we not?" broke in Augustus. "I mean to keep the anniversary of our meeting here, and assemble you all every year at this place. Perhaps I have forgotten to tell you that I am the owner of the villa. I have signed the contract this morning."

A cry of joy—almost a cheer—greeted this announcement, and Augustus went on.

"My ferns, and my green beetles, and my sea anemones, as Nelly enumerates them, can all be prosecuted here, and I purpose to remain and live here."

"And Castello?"

"Jack will go and live at Castello," continued he. "I have interceded with a lady of my acquaintance"—he did not glance at Julia, but she blushed as he spoke—"to keep a certain green room, with a little stair out of it down to the garden, for me when I go there. Beyond that I reserve nothing."

"We'll only half value the gift without you, old fellow," said Jack, as he passed his arm around her, and drew her fondly towards him.

"As one of the uninstructed public," interposed Cutbill, "I desire to ask, who are meant by 'We'?"

A half insolent toss of the head from Julia, meant specially for the speaker, was, however, seen by the others, who could not help laughing at it heartily.

"I think the uninstructed public should have a little deference for those who know more," broke in Jack, tartly, for he resented hotly whatever seemed to annoy Julia.

"Tom Cutbill is shunted off the line, I see," said Cutbill, mournfully.

"If he were," cried Augustus, "we should be about the most worthless set of people living. We owe him much, and like him even more."

"Now, that's what I call handsome," resumed Cutbill, "and if it wasn't a moment when you are all thinking of things a precious sight more interesting than T. C., I'd ask permission to return my acknowledgments in a speech."

"Oh, don't make a speech, Mr. Cutbill," said Julia.

"No, ma'am. I'll reserve myself till I return thanks for the bridesmaids."

"Will no one suppress him?" said Julia, in a whisper.

"Oh, I am so glad you are to live at Castello, dearest," said Nelly, as she drew Julia to her, and kissed her. "You are just the *châtelaine* to become it."

"There is such a thing as losing one's head, Nelly, out of sheer delight, and when I think I shall soon be one of you I run this risk; but tell me, dearest"—and here she whispered her lowest—"why is not our joy perfect? Why is poor George to be left out of all this happiness?"

"You must ask *him* that," muttered she, hiding her head on the other's shoulder.

"And may I, dearest?" cried Julia, rapturously. "Oh, Nelly, if there be one joy in the world I would prize above all it would be to know you were doubly my sister—doubly bound to me in affection. See, darling, see—even as we are speaking—George and your brother have

walked away together. Oh, can it be—can it be? Yes, dearest," cried she, throwing her arm around her; "your brother is holding him by the hand, and the tears are falling along George's cheek; his happiness is assured, and you are his own."

Nelly's chest heaved violently, and two low deep sobs burst from her, but her face was buried in Julia's bosom, and she never uttered a word. And thus Julia led her gently away down one of the lonely alleys of the garden, till they were lost to sight.

Lovers are proverbially the very worst of company for the outer world, nor is it easy to say which is more intolerable—their rapture or their reserve. The overweening selfishness of the tender passion conciliates no sympathy; very fortunately, it is quite indifferent to it. If it were not all-sufficing, it would not be that glorious delirium that believes the present to be eternal, and sees a world peopled only by two.

What should we gain, therefore, if we loitered in such company? They would not tell us *their* secrets—they would not care to hear ours. Let it be enough to say that, after some dark and anxious days in life, fortune once more shone out on those whom we saw so prosperous when first we met them. If they were not very brilliant nor very good, they were probably—with defects of temper and shortcomings in high resolve—pretty much like the best of those we know in life. Augustus, with a certain small vanity that tormented him into thinking that he had a lesson to read to the world, and that he was a much finer creature than he seemed or looked, was really a generously-minded and warm-hearted fellow, who loved his neighbour—meaning his brother or his sister—a great deal better than himself.

Nelly was about as good as—I don't think better than—nineteen out of every twenty honestly brought-up girls, who, not seduced by the luxuries of a very prosperous condition, come early to feel and to know what money can and what it cannot do.

Jack had many defects of hot temper and hastiness, but on the whole was a fine sailor-like fellow, carrying with him through life the dashing hardihood that he would have displayed in a breach or on a boarding, and thus occasionally exuberant, where smaller and weaker traits would have sufficed. Such men, from time to time, make troublesome first lieutenants, but women do not dislike them, and there is an impression abroad that they make good husbands, and that all the bluster they employ towards the world subsides into the mildest possible murmur beside the domestic hearth-rug.

Marion was not much more or much less than we have seen her; and though she became, by the great and distinguished services of her husband, a countess, she was not without a strange sentiment of envy for a certain small vicarage in Herts, where rosy children romped before the latticed porch, beneath which sat a very blooming and beautiful mother, and worked as her husband read for her. A very simple little home sketch; but it was the page of a life where all harmonized and all went smoothly

on : one of those lives of small ambitions and humble pleasures which are nearer Paradise than anything this world gives us.

Temple Bramleigh was a secretary of legation, and lived to see himself—in the uniformity of his manuscript, the precision of his docketing, and the exactness of his sealing-wax,—the pet of “the Office.” Acolytes, who swung incense before permanent secretaries, or held up the vestments of chief clerks, and who heard the words which drop from the high priests of foolscap, declared Temple was a rising man ; and with a brother-in-law in the Lords, and a brother rich enough to contest a seat in the Lower House, one whose future pointed to a high post and no small distinction : for, happily for us, we live in an age where self-assertion is as insufficient in public life as self-righteousness in religion, and our merits are always best cared for by imputed holiness.

The story of these volumes is of the Bramleighs, and I must not presume to suppose that my reader interests himself in the fate of those secondary personages who figure in the picture. Lady Augusta, however, deserves a passing mention, but perhaps her own words will be more descriptive than any of mine ; and I cannot better conclude than with the letter she wrote to Nelly, and which ran thus :—

“ DEAREST CHILD,—

“ Villa Altieri, Rome.

“ How shall I ever convey to you one-half the transport, the joy, the ecstasy I am filled with by this glorious news ! There is no longer a question of law or scandal or exposure. Your estates are your own, and your dear name stands forth untarnished and splendid, as it has ever done. It is only as I bethink me of what you and dearest Augustus and darling Jack must have gone through that I spare you the narrative of my own sufferings, my days of sorrow, my nights of crying. It was indeed a terrific trial to us all, and those horrid stories of hair turning white from grief made me rush to the glass every morning at daybreak with a degree of terror that I know well I shall never be able to throw off for many a year ; for I can assure you, dearest, that the washes are a mistake, and most pernicious ! They are made of what chemists call Ethiops mineral, which is as explosive as nitro-glycerine ; and once penetrating the pores, the head becomes, as Doctor Robertson says, a ‘charged shell.’ Can you fancy anything as horrible ? Incipient greyness is best treated with silver powder, which, when the eyelashes are properly darkened *at the base*, gives a very charming lustre to the expression. On no account use gold powder.

“ It was a Mr. Longworth, a neighbour of yours, whom you don’t know, brought me the first news ; but it was soon all over Rome, for his father—I mean Pracontal’s—was formerly much employed by Antonelli, and came here with the tidings that the mine had exploded, and blown up only themselves. A very dreadful man his father, with a sabre-scar down the cheek, and deep marks of manacles on his wrists and ankles ; but wouldn’t take money from the Cardinal, nor anything but a passport.

And they went away, so the police say, on foot, P. dressed in some horrid coarse clothes like his father; and oh, darling, how handsome he was, and how distinguished-looking! It was young France, if you like; but, after all, don't we all like the Boulevard de Ghent better than the Faubourg St. Germain? He was very witty, too; that is, he was a master of a language where wit comes easy, and could season talk with those nice little flatteries which, like floriture in singing, heighten the charm but never impair the force of the melody. And then, how he sang! Imagine Mario in a boudoir with a cottage piano accompaniment, and then you have it. It is very hard to know anything about men, but, so far as I can see, he was not a cheat; he believed the whole stupid story, and fancied that there had been a painter called Lami, and a beautiful creature who married somebody and was the mother of somebody else. He almost made me believe it, too; that is, it bored me ineffably, and I used to doze over it, and when I awoke I wasn't quite sure whether I dreamed he was a man of fortune or that such was a fact. Do you think he'll shoot himself? I hope he'll not shoot himself. It would throw such a lasting gloom over the whole incident that one could never fall back upon it in memory without deep sorrow; but men are so essentially selfish I don't think that this consideration would weigh with him.

"Some malicious people here circulated a story that he had made me an offer of marriage, and that I had accepted it. Just as they said some months ago that I had gone over to Rome, and here I am still, as the police-sheet calls me, a 'Widow and a Protestant.' My character for eccentricity exposes me naturally to these kinds of scandal; but, on the other hand, it saves me from the trouble of refuting or denying them. So that I shall take no notice whatever either of my conversion or my marriage, and the dear world—never ill-natured when it is useless—will at last accept the fact, small and insignificant though it be, just as creditors take half-a-crown in the pound after a bankruptcy.

"And now, dearest, is it too soon, is it too importunate, or is it too indelicate to tell your brother that, though I'm the most ethereal of creatures, I require to eat occasionally, and that, though I am continually reproved for the lowness of my dresses, I still do wear some clothes. In a word, dearest, I am in dire poverty, and to give me simply a thousand a year is to say, be a casual pauper. No one—my worst enemy—and I suppose I have a few who hate and would spitefully use me—can say I am extravagant. The necessities of life, as they are called, are the costly things, and these are what I can perfectly well dispense with. I want its elegancies, its refinements, and these one has so cheaply. What, for instance, is the cost of the bouquet on your dinner-table? Certainly not more than one of your entrées; and it is infinitely more charming and more pleasure-giving. My coffee costs me no more out of Sèvres than out of a white mug with a lip like a milk-pail; and will you tell me that the Mocha is the same in the one as the other? What I want is that life should be picturesque, that its elegancies should so surround one that

its coarser, grosser elements be kept out of sight; and this is a cheap philosophy. My little villa here—and nothing can be smaller—affords it; but come and see, dearest—that is the true way—come and see how I live. If ever there was an existence of simple pleasures it is mine. I never receive in the morning—I study. I either read improving books—I'll show you some of them—or I converse with Monsignore Galloni. We talk theology and mundane things at times, and we play besique, and we flirt a little; but not as you would understand flirtation. It is as though a light zephyr stirred the leaves of the affections and shook out the perfume, but never detached a blossom nor injured a bud. Monsignore is an adept at this game: so serious, and yet so tender, so spiritual, and, at the same time, so compassionate to poor weak human nature—which, by the way, he understands in its conflicts with itself, its motives, and its struggles as none of your laymen do. Not but poor Pracontal had a very ingenious turn, and could reconcile much that coarser minds would have called discrepant and contradictory.

“So that, dearest, with less than three thousand, or two five hundred, I must positively go to gaol. It has occurred to me that, if none care to go over to that house in Ireland, I might as well live there, at least for the two or three months in the year that the odious climate permits. As to the people, I know they would doat on me. I feel for them very much, and I have learned out here the true chords their natures respond to. What do you say to this plan? Would it not be ecstasy if you agreed to share it? The cheapness of Ireland is a proverb. I had a grand-uncle who once was Viceroy there, and his letters show that he only spent a third of his official income:

“I'd like to do this, too, if I only knew what my official income was. Ask Gusty this question, and kiss every one that ought to be kissed, and give them loves innumerable, and believe me ever your

“Doating mamma (or mamina, that's prettier);

“AUGUSTA BRAMLEIGH.

“I shall write to Marion to-morrow. It will not be as easy a task as this letter; but I have done even more difficult ones. So they are saying now that Culduff's promotion was a mere mistake; that there never was such a man as Sam Rogers at all—no case—no indemnity—no escape—no anything. O dear me, as Monsignore says, what rest have our feet once we leave total incredulity?”

Glimpses of Mauritius.

Few fairer islands can be compassed by the sea than Mauritius. When I first saw it the circumstances of the three preceding weeks had prepared me to be pleased with land in any form, but the lovely aspects of the welcome isle exceeded my highest hopes. Twenty-two days of semi-starvation in a small cranky brig, where, with seven other passengers, I shared the conveniences of a deck-house not much larger than a big packing-case, had led me to regard our voyage's end with feelings of unusual desire. At that time no regular communication existed between the South-east African port I had left, and port Louis. Now steamers pass monthly between the two places, and the passage is made pleasantly enough in eight or nine days. But at that time casual sailing-vessels offered the only available facilities of transit. My brig was a smart craft in her way, but her builders never designed her for passengers. The Scotch skipper, who had never been in those seas before, had given up his sleeping cabin to the wife and children of a fellow-voyager, who, together with myself and the captain, were stowed away overnight on lockers and in extemporised bunks, made about a foot too short for their occupants, in the little box which served as saloon.

The brig was empty, and carried only about sixty tons of sand as ballast. After we had been at sea ten days the vessel began to leak slightly; the consequence was that the sand assumed a semi-liquid state, choked the pumps, and made it necessary to bale out the water with buckets. Had bad weather come on, this shifting ballast might have been fatal to us all, but at that time of the year the South Indian Ocean is blessed by "calm seas, propitious gales," and our lively little vessel bounded through the water with just sufficient vivacity to spoil our meals. What those meals were I will not minutely say. For several days one skinny fowl per diem was all the dinner set down before seven hungry and hearty people. After a fortnight all the drinkables ran out. No one with the least susceptibility of palate could touch the foul, brackish water, except, indeed, when we managed to counteract the vileness of its flavour by a free intermixture of eau-de-cologne, lime-juice, and essence of ginger.

Down in the hold we had four very interesting passengers. They were ostriches on their way to Australia, where a friend on board intended to dispose of them. These birds were an endless source of entertainment. They had all the body of the vessel to themselves. With the sand beneath them they felt as much at home as any birds could feel under such circumstances. Their efforts to keep a footing were most ludicrous.

With wings outstretched, and straddling legs, they seemed for a time quite baffled by the novelty of their situation. At last the awkward creatures found that by squatting in the sand their enjoyment of life was much enhanced, and only when the intrusion of a man from above gave them a chance of adding a few buttons to their meal of corn would they get upon their feet.

All voyages have an end, but we began to fear that ours might be an exception. When two hundred miles, by reckoning, off Mauritius, it was found that the chronometer was at least eighty miles wrong. Three days later the skipper confessed that he could not say whether we were to the east or west of the island. If the former, then our course was all right, but if the latter were the case, every mile we sailed took us further away from our destination. With our stock of food and water exhausted, the possibility of our being on a landless tack was not pleasant, and we all felt more or less anxious. That evening, just before dark, the mate thought he saw land amidst the clouds on the far horizon. We all gazed eagerly on that dim, leaden speck, and hoped for the best. Long before daylight dawned the men of our party were gathered on the larboard side of the deck, smoking the time away, and waiting patiently for the morning. At last we made out in the clear starlight a dark appearance just ahead. It might be a bank of clouds, of course, but to our common satisfaction it neither moved nor faded. Gradually the mass took distinct and stationary form, until, as the yellow flush of dawn cleared the prospect, the peaks and rugged outline of our destination lay stretched before us.

That was a truly joyous morning when the rugged outline of the island lay before us, and few prospects can be fairer than that presented by Mauritius as seen from the sea. The island does not, as so often is the case, lift itself from the ocean in one mass of rising ground. It may be likened to a green sloping lawn, out of which spring abruptly many steep and craggy hills. At the south end the heights are more continuous, terminating in a bold lion-shaped headland, the *Lion Couchant*. The other *coggeries* of hills are more detached. Along the western shore there are three or four single mountains, such as the *Black River Hills* and the *Corps du Garde*, huge masses of bare rock forming an excellent foil to the rich, cane-laden, champagne plains which gently undulate around and between them. Over the plains of *St. Pierre* we get a glimpse of the wooded gorge of the *Tamarind Falls*. The huge steep-sided bulk of the *Corps du Garde* frowns over the *Plaines Wilhelms*, which lie one sheet of rustling canes around it. The tufted heights round *Cure Pipe* shut out from view the picturesque *Calebasses Mountains* behind; but right ahead, the dark, strangely crested clump of hills around *Port Louis* looms up gravely, and we eagerly descry the stopper-shaped summit of *Pieterboth*. All round the shore the plumes of the palm-tree give a thoroughly tropical aspect to the scene, and they are intermixed with the feathery stems of the ever-swaying *filao*. Below this fringe of trees the white foam of the breakers on the coral reef that surrounds the

island makes a pleasant contrast. Down to the water's edge the vegetation is fresh and varied, vying in intensity with the blue overhead, which is mottled here and there by the smoke curling from the three hundred mill-houses on the island.

Next morning we found that our brig lay in the midst of a fleet of about thirty American whalers, which had flocked to Mauritius in order to hear news of the war that had just begun. We were not in the harbour proper, but in the roadstead, about a mile and a half to seaward of where the masts of about a hundred vessels clustered thickly together in the fore-front of the town.

Port Louis is hemmed in by high and steep hills on all but its seaward side. These heights rise abruptly immediately behind the town, and the only breeze it gets fairly is that from the sea. All day the lofty reflectors around concentrate the sun's rays, and prevent their dispersion. The mountains which spring almost at one bound from the sea to a height of 3,000 feet seem to glower upon the place, and the glimpses of shade and verdure one gets when in the town are not visible from shipboard. My first impressions of the place itself are these:—A wide open space, with two-storied buildings all round it, and a stone monument of Labourdonnais—the French founder of the colony—in its centre, and a ponderous drinking-fountain,—deliciously suggestive in such a climate—splashing coolly by the water-side; large dock-sheds on either hand, piled up with bags of sugar, and flanked by rows, three and four deep, of the small coasting luggers; a large pile of stone warehouses, a long row of red-roofed iron stores, a profusion of ship chandleries, a general air of the Minories, crossed with Mincing Lane, and smacking strongly of Calcutta; shoals of coolies, Malabars, Chinamen, and negroes—both Malayish and African in their origin—thronging this area, and making deafening discord; stench of the subtlest nature flagrantly pervading the air; drays, carts, carioles, and carriages scudding everywhere:—such are the first sights that greet you. Sugar, of course, is everywhere. It is in the warehouses, in the boats, in the custom-house, in the ships' bottoms, in the carts, in the wharves, and on the backs of porters; it is in the air—the predominant and the least objectionable of the prevalent odours; it is in the little tin boxes that bulge the pockets of almost every one you may meet hereabout; it is in the books, deep and heavy, of every house of trade you see around you; it is in the thoughts of every true-born Mauritian in this sugar-bound and sugar-sustained island.

Of its 80,000 inhabitants (now reduced to barely 60,000), I found about three-fourths of "coloured" parentage; the rest being mostly creoles, real Mauritians, who pride themselves in a distinction which, in some cases, is hardly perceptible, so pale-faced are some of the "coloured people" with whom a white creole would think it degradation to associate. The darker class ranges from the densest black to the faintest tinge of yellow. Many of these half or quarter castes are very handsome. You meet at every turn a swarthy face, the profile of which is really beautiful.

Sustained as these heads usually are by shapely figures, and set off by spick and span clothing—for your “coloured gentleman” is the prince of dandies—you find yourself obliged to confess that you meet with much worse-looking men amongst races of far higher pretensions. About their *morale* I say naught.

There are few architectural charms about the city. Much sameness marks the narrow angular streets. They are all macadamized, and have, on either side, narrow strips of pavement. Reeking gutters traverse them all. Man-holes, at regular distances, emit the foulest odours. Shops are plentiful enough, but without any display of plate-glass. Under a tropical sun, however, it would be madness to expose articles of any value to such a glare as you get here. I was much interested in the domestic interiors of the coloured householders. Cingalese jewellers, Chinese storekeepers, Hindoo confectioners abound, carrying on their trade in little poky places, smelling most emphatically of the East. For the Orient has its smell, distinct and recognisable, unlike any other smell to be met with among Western natives.

After some weeks' residence in Port Louis, during a healthy season, I cannot truthfully give it other than the worst sanitary character. The city is in a huge oven. By day and night during summer it is equally “muggy” and oppressive. Nor does man do anything to mitigate the natural inconveniences of the spot. In this remarkable town you meet with entire indifference to the laws that govern health. The gutters I have mentioned with a regard to the reader's feelings. The houses are cramped together, and their courtyards are too often unutterably odious. From these yards and gutters poisonous vapours steam forth, and penetrate into every dwelling. In other respects there is utter disregard of the common decencies of domestic life.

Who can wonder that such a town is every few years ravaged by epidemic disease? With awful regularity does death reappear in his most terrible form. Cholera has made repeated visitations, and slain its hosts of victims. The nervous terror with which this scourge is regarded, would be, were the matter not so grave, almost ludicrous. A few days before I left the island, two or three cases of sporadic cholera occurred, and the whole community was in agitation. At the eleventh hour hasty sanitary measures were taken: houses were drenched with chloride of lime; camphor was at a premium; an exodus into the country took place. But it was of no avail; for the disease did its work inexorably, and taught another unregarded lesson.

But of all previous outbreaks of epidemic none has equalled that which has even yet not ended. The fever common in various types along the whole sea-board of Africa appeared in Mauritius with the new year of 1867, and before the month of May was out, nearly 40,000 persons had been carried off by it. In Port Louis alone 16,000 died. Almost every inhabitant was attacked by it, not once, but as usual with jungle fever, several times. Not a doubt exists that the virulence of the outbreak was

attributable to the sanitary deficiencies of the town. The coloured people suffered most severely; nor could it be otherwise. Their quarters are known as Black Town and Malabar Town. I pity the man who essays to explore those vile places. I was compelled to do so once, at early morn, while on my way to the top of the Signal Hill. My recollections of the locality are but slight; for "holding my nose" in my handkerchief, I rushed in hot haste to get out of the scene of horror. All I know is that there was an implacable stench; a swarm of dirty, naked, discoloured brats, rolling in reeking gutters; a medley of low kennels and houses, rickety, rotten, closely packed wooden dens, pervaded by the noises of Bedlam. In these miserable tenements the coolies are herded together like pigs. They like it. It is their normal state of being: they are bred in filth, live in filth, eat, drink, and die in filth. Nothing but the strictest and closest supervision of these people would make them lead cleanly lives or keep wholesome houses. For years the formation of "Indian villages" according to fixed principles and rules, where sanitary reforms might be carried out by main force, has been proposed, but without avail.

Not that Port Louis is an ugly town to the eye. It has many pleasant though not redeeming features. At every corner in convenient localities streams of water may be seen issuing from pipes. Drinking-fountains, both in town and country, are abundant. No denizen of a cold climate can appreciate the luxury which these supplies of cold water are under a Mauritian sun in summer; and where so large a coloured population resides the value of these arrangements cannot be over-estimated. Then, too, the town has its "Company's Gardens"—a perfect paradise to the hot and weary wayfarer. This pleasant space is in the centre of the city, and is thickly planted with trees and shrubs, whose interlacing boughs give a dense shade. Under these cocoa-nut, bread-fruit, and banyan trees, one can stretch tired limbs on the many seats that are placed around fountains that purl and splash refreshingly, and watch the dark-eyed beauties who are taking the air under the charge of sombre ayahs. And at the upper end of the town is a yet more fashionable resort—the Champ de Mars. This airy expanse is covered with soft turf, and around it the Rotten Row of Mauritius runs, where, on band days, all manner of fancy vehicles, laden with blooming brunettes or blanché blondes, alike irresistible, are driven in state; and dandies of the first water ride dandy horses. Here, too, on moonlit nights, family groups assemble, and young and old, without distinction, play childish games with charming simplicity and freedom.

The houses in Mauritius are mostly two-storied, and built of wood, although in some cases the basement is of stone. Shingle roofs are also common, even Government House being thus covered in. These slabs of wood are obtained to a great extent out of the forests of the island, and as, after a brief exposure to the weather, they get dingy, if not black, they are not an attractive architectural feature. Some of the private

mansions in Port Louis are even handsome. They have all wide verandahs round each story, and these are often closed in with arabesque railings. The piazzas are commonly paved with mosaic tiles or polished wood, fluted pillars supporting the roof. Ornamental vases, filled with beautiful flowering plants, line the walls. Cool cane chairs and sofas offer pleasant lounges in this the usual reception-room. For in a hot climate, however spacious and well furnished a drawing-room may be, it has no charms to compare with the cool air and verdant environments of the verandah. There it is the visitor is asked to seat himself; nor will he be long there before he is besought to refresh himself with vermouth or claret, the favourite drinks of the country.

Many of the Mauritian houses are eminently characteristic of that love of display and ostentation which has helped on the serious embarrassments of the community. The establishment at Labourdonnais would do credit to an English noble. Within the walls of the château (for it deserves the name,) there are lofty apartments furnished with Parisian luxury, adapted to the circumstances of a tropical climate. Statues, globe-mirrors, marble tables, and easy chairs crowd the long verandahs. Fountains are seen and heard splashing in the gardens. A large pagoda-like pavilion in the grounds is given up to billiards. A deer-yard contains many species of elands, stags, and antelopes. Within the orchards or groves of litchie, nutmeg, orange, jack-fruit, and mango trees, several enormous turtle are found thriving. The biggest of these is reputed to be of enormous age. He was a patriarch 200 years ago, and easily carries on his back three men. An elephant is also part of the establishment. The aviary covers a large piece of ground, and is planted with shrubs and trees, so that its captives, gathered from many lands, have little cause to pine for liberty.

Few and paltry are the public buildings in the island. For its size Port Louis is about as poor in this respect as any town I know of. Government House is like a tumble-down barrack,—three stories, with a verandah round each floor, shut in by blinds or jalousies, with neither paint on the walls nor polish on the panes. The Government offices are all mean and straggling; the courts of justice have no presentable exterior; the theatre is, with its Grecian portico, the most pretentious edifice in the town. Little can be said for the Roman Catholic cathedral, except that it is massive and large, and contains one or two good pictures, which are unfortunately surrounded by many daubs. The English cathedral was once a powder magazine, and has walls of immense thickness. Port Louis is well defended. Not only are there immense barracks in the town, but on a hill directly overlooking the town, at most parts of it, in fact, rests a strong fortress, while at the mouth of the harbour, in Tonniliers Island, Fort George frowns large and formidable. Two or three regiments of the Queen's troops are stationed in the island, not merely for its internal protection, but also as a dépôt for other possessions, should disturbances arise in any of them.

I must confess to being disappointed with "mine inns" in the Isle of France. Much had been said to me about the palatial luxury of these establishments. I was to be housed like a prince, and fed like an epicure. My expectations were not realised. The "Hôtel de l'Europe" was our first destination. Our hopes ran high as we passed Government House, and neared the scene of bliss. Three weeks of hard fare on shipboard had reduced us to a point highly favourable to the enjoyment of creature comforts. A majestic gateway in a high wall admitted us to a small garden, where palms and flowering shrubs hid from view a large two-storied building, skirted from end to end with a verandah twenty feet in width, more than a hundred feet long, and paved like most ground-floors throughout the island, with marble tiles. This capacious piazza is furnished café-like, with little tables and arm-chairs, and it is here that the visitors mostly pass their time. A large hall introduces you to a marble staircase, flanked by pier-glasses, leading up to the bedrooms, which are simply furnished with iron bedsteads, hung with mosquito-curtains, and covered with superfluous thin sheets. A bit of matting, and a washhand stand complete the furniture. In such a climate more or heavier garnishing would be unpleasant.

There are but two meals daily—breakfast and dinner. It is weary work waiting for the former. Everybody in the island rises betimes, soon after sunrise. Few sluggards are there. Save for a tiny cup of strong coffee, you have to wait as patiently as may be until the morning meal is served. Truly is it a breakfast, liberal and differing little from dinner. At both a bottle of very fair *vin ordinaire* is set down for your consumption, being part of the carte. Mauritius gets its wines direct from France, and gets them so cheap that these light, pleasant beverages are no luxury or scarcity. I have been in several lands, and amongst different kinds of people: but I think these islanders understand the art of living as well as any, and better than most. You must go to a hot climate to appreciate claret properly—as you appreciate it here in Port Louis, when, about eleven o'clock, of a scorching forenoon, you have the goblet at your side filled with lumps of ice, imported hither in the Yankee whale-ships already talked about, and over which you pour your claret, and then sip it, while the cold morsels gradually melt as the glass requires replenishing.

As for the general composition of a Mauritian meal, it is much what French meals are everywhere. You don't long for solid or ponderous dishes, and you don't get them. There is more show than substance about these repasts; but then the hot and jaded body craves more for the fanciful than the heavy. They present a series of lilliputian dishes, garnished prettily and containing more moisture than matter. Vast masses of rice are handed round to begin with. Then comes the currie, *chef-d'œuvre* of the seasoner's art; but delicious though it is, very skinny drumsticks and pinions are found therein. Or there are chops—in other words, frizzled fragments of bone. Not that the table is devoid of

delicacies. Crayfish—two feet long, beautifully pink and white,—deserve attention. Prawns, or monstrous shrimps,—small lobsters, rather,—are a feast in themselves. Platters of mango and tomato chutney might cope even with *mal-du-mer*. Beans and peas, in all manner of dressings, cone-like artichokes, massive asparagus, piles of green pease, bowls of salad, bunches of celery, and last, though most conspicuous of all, large quantities of a kind of spinach, known locally as bread, and in immense demand,—these are the common components of a Mauritian breakfast.

The dinner differs in little except that hot joints are introduced, and occasionally “sweets” are admitted into the *menu*, though these last are usually represented by small portions of conserves and tiny pats of butter. Fruit, too, is plentiful; and the Mauritians have a charming knack of decking out their tables with coloured glass, crockery, and flowers.

But I have not done yet with the “Europe.” What was it that so disgusted us with that establishment, and, despite the brilliance of its noble verandah when lighted at night by forty lanterns, shedding a fitful light on the rustling palm-leaves and the fragrant shrubs in the garden, sent us out, after a day’s experience, in search of an inn more to our mind? It grieves me to say that it was the special bane of Port Louis that frightened us away. The ghost which haunts the island—uncleanliness—turned us adrift. In those particulars wherein England so differs from the Continent this hotel was inconceivably offensive. Hence our exodus to the “Hôtel Masse,” an old and homelier establishment, much in repute amongst the English planters. This place had none of the pretensions of the other. It was a rambling, shaky building, not unlike English hostleries of the old times, with a broad verandah round each story, and a dark open staircase. Even this hotel, however, in a sanitary point of view, cannot be recommended. In fact, the measure of dirt and smelliness at the two places may be set down at six for the “Europe,” and at half-a-dozen for the “Masse.” But then you have better attendance at the last, and the meals are better cooked. The charges are the same at all. Ten shillings a day covers a room, attendance, two meals, and two bottles of claret. Mauritius is not, therefore, the dear place, it is reputed to be. The French system of no soap is in vogue here, and we were charged extra, at the rate of one-and-sixpence for a cake of brown Windsor. There, too, the lavatory appliances are reduced to an absurdity. The towels are like table napkins, and the ewers hold a pint of water. Unquestionably the verandah is the best feature of hotel life. It is far the most popular. At all hours of the day and night (up to nine o’clock) the little tables are occupied by languid visitors seated near them, sipping coffee, cognac, eau-de-sucré, vermouth, or thin claret, with the inactivity which befits the climate.

Much might be written about the modes of life in Mauritius, for the islanders are not as others are in many respects. They eat differently, and drink differently. There is novelty in the way they dress, and in the manner of their lying down. The climate of Port Louis is that of a half-

heated oven; and the state of nature, were it permissible, would be the nearest approach to bodily comfort. Here, however, extremes meet, and we have people clad, in the height of tropical summer, as though they were shivering under an Arctic winter. Their fondness for black garments at noontime is inscrutable. From the hats that cover their locks, to the polished boots that encase their feet, they are black entirely. No creole seems to think himself a man while in Port Louis, or at least a gentil-homme, unless he is dressed like an undertaker. I was told that some of these sable-clad gentry half starve, and in other ways pinch themselves, in order to wear a black surtout. This vision of black coats affects a stranger most uncomfortably. Another paradox is the assumption of white garments in many creole families as correct evening dress. One gentleman of my acquaintance received the earnest apologies of his host for the tailor's inability to supply his guest with a white coat fit to dine in. Herein the islanders are truly wise in their generation; it would be well for them were they to begin the custom earlier in the day.

Mauritius ought certainly, if the nursery rhyme has any truth in it, to be "healthy, wealthy, and wise," as it goes to bed early and rises early. At six in the morning everybody seems up and enjoying the best hours of the day. Now it is that the marketing is done, and the papers are read, and the shops are opened, and the strolls are taken. Having sipped his cup of coffee—strong, aromatic, and inspiring; having laved his feet in the foot-pan, misnamed a bath; having rubbed his face with a small excuse for a towel, and dipped his fingers in the apology for a basin; having attired his languid person *à la mode*, and scanned it in a mirror of generous area, the creole will handle his dandy bit of a cane, and descend to the *pavé*, whose intricacies he will traverse for the next hour, while the sun is scarcely yet above the huge hinder hills, and the dew still clings to the leaves. Or, perchance, he will call his carriage and take a drive, or, if more lazily disposed, may lounge away the early morn in the shade of his verandah. If he be a man of business he will go to the Exchange rooms, and have a prefatory gossip over the latest journal as he sits beneath the trees that adjoin that institution. Then comes breakfast; and thereafter, towards eleven o'clock, the inactively active duties of the day begin. About four, or earlier, maybe, he returns to the bosom of his family, who occupy the interval between noon and sunset, either in drives about the town, or in dreary siestas in the garden or piazza. Thus may be seen many households, from paterfamilias and his spouse down through the gradations of youths and damsels to the little infant in arms, smoking cigars on the male part, or chatting on the feminine part, until the dinner-hour arrives; when the whole of this happy family—and I use the term seriously—gather round the common board and eat currie and conserves for the next hour. There will be no exodus of the fair sex. Those gentle beings abide at the table until coffee has been served; then there is a general adjournment to the verandah, where cigars, gossip, and music, are the order of the evening. Not for long though. Rarely after

nine is a respectable household out of bed. Before ten o'clock, most of the lights are extinguished, and the family sleeping, or courting sleep under their solitary sheets, and inevitable mosquito curtains.

To an Englishman used to hours not quite so primitive, this early closing system is a drawback. Only one hotel in Port Louis seems accessible after ten o'clock. The "Masse" closed religiously at nine o'clock or a little after. The "Europe" shuts up professedly at ten, and I have even seen a very convivial dinner-party of Frenchmen broken up at that hour, although their frantic efforts to raise cheers after the English fashion indicated a strong desire to make a night of it.

The creole Mauritians love show and splendour, and will pay high to gratify their inclinations. They like a profusion of jewellery upon their persons, and of plate upon their sideboards. They like to be equal, if not superior, in the matter of personal and domestic appointments to their neighbours. They like their mills to be as large and powerful as those around them. There are, let it be observed, many exceptions to this rule. There are highly intelligent and well-educated people who, on the other hand, do not care to go beyond their means, or to indulge in external luxuries so long as home comforts are theirs. My first remark applies more especially to townspeople. My last has more immediate reference to the country: as in my own limited circle I knew of several such households where the daily commingling under the same roof of two or three generations affords happy evidence of domestic harmony, and where hospitality is dispensed to every stranger with a thorough heartiness without display. This habit of married sons and wedded daughters living and multiplying under the parental roof is more French than English; but surely family discord must be rare where such an arrangement can be amicably carried out. As illustrative of Mauritian hospitality, I may state that to most planters' residences a "strangers' house" is attached, where accommodation of the most comfortable character awaits any passing friend or stranger. In no country can a visitor meet with kindlier treatment than in the populous Isle of France.

The point or centre of greatest amusement in Port Louis is, not its theatre, library, or *glacière*, but its market. It is there that I spent the most enjoyable hours of my sojourn; it is there I would go first were I to visit the island again. What the charm of the place is I cannot well say. Perhaps it may be the Oriental, bazaar-like aspect of the scene; perhaps the refreshing fruits that abound there; perhaps the motley multitude of all nations, creeds, and colours that crowd the mart; perhaps a mixture of all.

To see the market to perfection you must rise betimes, and get there by six o'clock. At that hour all its treasures will be visible, and all its *habitués* assembled. Long before daylight the vendors of produce have been plodding along the highways, bearing in large tin boxes the things they have to offer. If you pass along *Chausée Street* and *Farquhar Street* you will see where all these dealers congregate. What a scene

greet you when you pass through the massive gateway, supported by a stone lodge! which lets you through a lofty iron palisading. Babel, and nothing short of it.

Men gathered from every quarter of the globe here mingle. Mauritius is such a calling-place for the world's shipping as you find nowhere else, and all nations and tongues are represented in its streets—Nubians, black-skinned and bare-legged, like their Mozambique brethren, whose vaster mouths are grinning everywhere; Hindoos of all castes, and colours, and races; Parsees with long robe-like paletots, and oddly-shaped hats, draped round with puggeries, cunningly interwoven with gold wire; long-haired, skull-capped Malabars; sharp-visaged, gaily-clad Madrassees; Greek-featured Cingalese; Arabs, solemnly bearded and turbaned, moving with ostrich-like stateliness, as though they, the faithful, were lords of all. And there is John Chinaman, with his unfailing ribbonless straw hat, and his blue calico trousers and jacket, his pigtail discreetly stowed away, coronet-wise, and his crooked eyes gleaming acquisitively as he drives a hard bargain, literally farthing by farthing. Here, too, the creole islanders, black-hatted and coated as usual, early as is the day, lounge lazily, with a few blue-habited planters from the country, and here and there a female figure. There is the garrison party of British soldiers purveying for the mess, and too experienced in their work to be readily taken in. And here, happy sight to a loyal Englishman, are groups of Jack Tars, including a few of all nations, but in the main representing those we love best. Healthy-looking, smiling, good-natured, chaffing, but easily bamboozled, they are easily relieved of the few coins burning in their unretentive pockets. Men of the cloth are here too—priests, whose rosy cheeks and sleek faces tell a tale of good living. Sisters of Mercy, moreover, who creep cautiously and with a deprecating manner about, and who, I'll be bound, are as hard to cheat as anybody, and who, indeed, by virtue of their true and womanly office, deserve to be cheated least of any. These, and many more, are some types of human life to be met with in this curious medley of our species.

The market itself consists of a series of light elegant sheds, paved with stone or marble, and duly divided into compartments. It is about 300 feet long and 250 feet wide. Neither counters nor tables are provided for the goods offered, but simply the bare floor. Each stall-holder takes his stand, or rather his seat, upon the stones, where he squats calmly in the midst of his little piles of cabbages, fruit, potatoes, beans, pepper, ginger, tomatoes, and so forth. In the intervals of custom the vendor employs himself with shelling beans or picking roots. He, or she—for the fair sex are much given to the art of selling—do not overpower passers-by with demands for patronage. If you pause nigh, he looks up with dignity, and awaits your pleasure, or possibly he may hazard a remark laudatory of his wares. If you wish to buy, about one-third of what is asked will be a fair approximation to the real price. First prices are only nominal. Fine potatoes are to be had at twopence-halfpenny a pound;

eggs, three-halfpence each; celery, fourpence a bunch; broccoli, fivepence each; green mangoes, a penny each; pumpkins, sixpence each, or a half-penny a slice. Here are balls of tamarinds, most dainty material for a chutney, at a penny a pound; tiny onions can be had at three-halfpence a pound. Tolerably large egg-plants, the insides of which are stuffed with herbs and chopped meat, are the same price. Nine insipid tomatoes can be had for a halfpenny. Haricot beans, of all colours and sizes, are present everywhere. Of fruits there is a poor show, the only noticeable one being the delicious litchie—a little-known but most delicious fruit, growing in a large shrublike tree, having a hard sheath, which comes off readily, showing something like a strawberry. In taste it resembles a muscadel grape, but there is a large stone in the centre. They are sold at about two for a penny.

In the meat market there is more variety and a better quality of produce. Especially is this the case in the fish section. There is a plentiful supply of fresh turtle at a shilling per pound. There are turtle eggs, too, the best being those that are found after dissection. Noble crayfish, two feet long at least, are only one shilling and sixpence each. The crabs are small and untempting. Mangalls, a sort of catfish, are offered for one shilling and sixpence. Long-nosed guard-fish can be bought for two shillings each. But these pretty, sky-blue speckled fellows, yclept "skipjacks," are more to one's taste. One instinctively shudders before the young sharks, which look harmless and flabby enough now, but whose budding teeth are really too significant. They are good eating, nevertheless, weigh five pounds, and cost one shilling and sixpence. Other fish are here in abundance, and in strange variety of form and colour: scarlet, orange, green and blue—flashing an hour or two ago, meteor-like, through the limpid waters of the Indian Sea.

Pass on to the flesh-stalls. The beef consumed in the island is very fair to the eye, and far from inestimable as to quality. Prices range, according to cut, from sixpence to sevenpence-halfpenny a pound. Mutton is dearer, and of indifferent quality, being tough, and one shilling per pound. Pork was not to be seen, and for certain remarkable reasons it is not in repute amongst the *white* residents. A full-grown fowl sells for three shillings, but then how mean and scraggy, how leggy and skinny is the bird! Turkey and geese, however, are abundant. Many a fine flock may you see cackling or strutting round the shabby hut of some Malabar poulterer. Bread is white, spongy, and threepence a pound; slices thereof you may partake of at the coffee-stalls, where dark Phyllises dispense cupfuls of coffee to large groups of customers, most of whom are sailors or wayfarers.

I ought, perhaps, to have said that all the stall-holders in the market are coloured people, either Indian coolies or Chinamen. They are bound to exhibit signboards, and the inscriptions on some of these are highly amusing and graphic. Fine pretensions mark them all. These retailers have souls above those of their European rivals, and no plain presentment

of a name unadorned by any prefix will do for them. Take, for instance, these literal transcriptions of one or two.

Mr. Scholastique,
Belle Fruit.

The next is a publican. Possibly he may be a noted epicure, and his own tastes are therefore a guarantee of excellence :

Mr. K. Montousa,
My Grocer.

A wizened, puckered little Hindoo announces himself as

Mr. Ramsamy.

The following, though puzzling, can be solved :

Mr. Appasamy. Vege.
Tables. Fruits.

Upon a board of scant dimensions appears this declaration :

Mr. Souptave,
N. Vegetable.
S.

We are next introduced to an historical character impersonated by a very small boy :

Mr. Abdool Kader,
Grocer.

Then comes a thrilling announcement. How terse, and expressive of the stout, copper-hued Juno beneath :

Madame.

My last might do for the second column in *The Times*. It yet baffles my powers of comprehension :

Mr. Troovanga.
Dayadiachy.
Pakee Kee Padiachy.
Draper.

While taking these strange inscriptions down, I became the unconscious cause of intense anxiety to each of the vendors in turn. Anxious looks were cast ; low whispers interchanged. At last, unable to restrain their curiosity any longer, one of the "inscribed" inquired of my companion whether I was not a police commissioner, and what dire fate was awaiting them for what unknown offence.

No better way to get a good idea of the topography of Mauritius can be desired than to make a trip up the Pouce. There are two hills in Mauritius distinguished by a peculiar conformation of their summits. They are the highest points in the island. One is Pieterboth, so called after a sailor who immortalized himself by being the first to scale this perilous pinnacle. The peak itself is a difficult point to reach, as the sides are like a wall. But crowning this cone is a large mass of rock like a decanter-stopper. As the shelving sides of this odd-looking apex overhang

the point in which it rests, the ascent can only be performed with the aid of kites, rope-ladders, and lines. On this account, and as the trip takes three days to accomplish, it is but rarely attempted, and then mostly by nautical men. La Pouce, on the other hand, is more accessible, and nearer the town, rising directly at the back of the Port Louis to an equal height and named from the thumb-like cone which crowns it.

Early one morning, before the sun rose, four Englishmen, of whom I was one, started, staff in hand, and with a Malabar breakfast-carrier behind them, for this point. They were roughly and coolly clad. Down College Street and up to the Chat d'Or they passed, through the washing ground. At this place a large iron pipe or tube ejects a torrent of water, shooting forward for several feet. Beyond this the stone-strewn hollow is filled from an early hour with washermen and washerwomen, whose shrill screeching and merciless battering of linen creates a dreadful uproar. Beyond this we ascend through a rough and stony country, leaving the houses behind. On our left is the Chat d'Or, a pleasant shady retreat, where several wise townsmen have taken refuge. Before long the friendly shade of bushes is gained, and we are fairly in the Pouce valley. Our course now lies along a ledge of rock skirting the foot of a tremendous precipice, and also overlooking a deep gorge, beyond which uprise the abrupt hills that form the other side of the amphitheatre. After traversing a rich grove of trees along a gradually ascending road, made many years ago by the French soldiers, the open brow of a lower tier of hills is gained. We get stray glimpses of the panoramic scene behind, and of the gloomy ravines in front. For some distance the path passes along this neck or ridge, until it turns round the hill, and we find a delicious stream of cool and clear water purling by the wayside. A walk of half a mile brought us into a dark, cold, and dense jungle, consisting of small trees packed in with ferns of all shapes and varieties. So close is the foliage overhead, and so cool the spot, that the dew yet hangs about every twig and blade, and the ground is quite damp. Along a very narrow and tortuous pass, and under trees that barely allow us to proceed without stooping, we pick our way, now descending, now rising, until the ascent becomes palpable. Half a mile, or a mile, of this sort of work ends in the bush getting smaller, until it leaves us on either side, and we are at the bottom of the Pouce, or thumb-like cone, an almost perpendicular pinnacle, about 150 feet in height. Now for a scramble. Without looking behind, or seeing anything but the rock before us, we go at it, hands and knees, striding up this boulder; heaving our bodies up by bits of herbage that protrude from the sheer side of this cliff; climbing like monkeys, until, before we know what we are passing over or how we are progressing, the summit is gained, and our breath is nearly taken away, as, squatting down on the rock, we realise the steepness of the narrow spire we have surmounted.

What a view it is, what a plunge it would be! Nothing obtrudes to

mar the prospect at our feet. The few square feet of rock on which we are crouching, unaccustomed yet to so dizzy an altitude, seem suspended in the air. Just below us, as a stone might drop, is an undulating mass of forest, lining the shoulder on which the cone rests, and plumed with tree ferns. On one side are Pieterboth, cliff-like, and his fellow mountains. At his feet are sugar plantations, but at ours is the valley of the Chat d'Or, shut in by ranges of hills, and disclosing the town of Port Louis, with its harbour, and forts, and shipping, clearly outlined as in a map. Far to the north stretches the plain of Pamplemousses, with its strongly indented shore, and its yellow gleam of cane-fields. Far to the east and south are seen, beyond an intervening series of ravines and mountains, the Plaines Wilhelms, the Corps du Garde, and the distant Lion Couchant buttressing the island westward. Round on the land side a glorious panorama of champagne country, squared all over like a chess-board with numberless plantations, and sprinkled with tall chimneys and sugar-buildings in the centre of every emerald square, spreads out below us. There is an estate about twelve hundred feet beneath, but so directly under our eyes that every movement in it is visible, and it seems as if our voices must surely be heard there. This magnificent stretch of sugar-country, comprising the districts of Moka, Plaines Wilhelms, and Vacoa, shows us at one glance what Mauritius is. Beyond this the hills of Flacq, Rempart, and, finally, of Grandport, peaked and shaggy, shut in the landward view. Imagine this glorious revelation of land and water, as seen under a tropical sun, on a summer morning. Imagine this vision of a whole fair and fertile island, framed in by the ocean,—and that ocean the rich Indian Sea,—calm and glittering, melting away amid many a sunbeam into the haze of the horizon, and flecked by the white sails of the merchantmen that are ever flocking there. Imagine, I say, this magnificent unfolding of a large and populous island, with its closely packed habitations, its jostling cane-fields, its bristling sugar-mills, and its lavish vegetation, and you may feel some of the glamour that bound us to that by no means comfortable pinnacle. Since standing there, I have seen many of the fairest landscapes in the world; and I think none present a more marvellous combination of natural beauty and human activity than may be witnessed from the summit of La Pouce.

Some Notes on *Othello*.

AS MANY who are sufficiently familiar with Shakspeare's plays have perhaps but a slight and vague knowledge of the difficulties attendant on criticism of the Shakspearian text, it may not be amiss to mention some facts concerning its history and condition, before offering to our readers a few notes, chiefly explanatory of disputed, misinterpreted, and unexplained passages in *Othello*.

Of the plays of Shakspeare it may be said that, as subjects for the critic's labours, they stand alone, and that he approaches them under circumstances altogether peculiar and different from those under which he takes in hand the works of other authors. In the ordinary exercise of his art he has to deal with texts which have been given to the world under the superintendence of the author, or, at least, of editors who represent him, and have been furnished with his manuscripts to guide their labours. But no line of Shakspeare's plays has come to the world with any such guarantee that it is what the author actually wrote. Of the thirty-seven comedies, histories, and tragedies which bear his name, seventeen were indeed printed and published separately in quartos during his life-time, but even these were given to the world without either his consent or knowledge; printed at various dates from clandestinely made transcripts of manuscript copies in the possession of theatrical managers. Nor had even these copies been directly taken from the poet's own MSS., but they were doubtless, in many cases, transcripts of transcripts to several removes from the originals, vitiated and corrupted in some parts by the tasteless interpolations or reckless omissions of the players, and in others mutilated and curtailed for the convenience of managers.

Seven years after Shakspeare's death the first collected edition was published of thirty-six only of the plays attributed to him, *Pericles*, which in subsequent editions makes the thirty-seventh, being omitted. In the preface to this,—the folio of 1623, or the first folio, as it is usually called,—the editors, Heminge and Condell the players, profess that whereas before the reader had been "abused with divers stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors that exposed them, even those are now offered to his view cured and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest" (*i.e.* the twenty plays which had not been previously printed) "absolute in their numbers as he conceived them." In this, however, they professed much more than they performed. The folio of 1623 was, beyond all question, made up in part from those very quartos which were denounced as surreptitious, mutilated, and worthless; and this so carelessly, that obvious typographical errors are again

and again reproduced in the former from the latter. Indeed, at this time all Shakspeare's original MSS. had probably perished, the greater number in the fire by which the Globe Theatre was destroyed in 1613, the rest perhaps by the neglect of those in whose hands they were, and who little knew what a priceless treasure any one of them would have been esteemed by a later age. Accordingly the folio of 1623,—partly consisting of reprints from the quartos, and disfigured by many of the vices which the circumstances of their production rendered inevitable; partly founded on managers' transcripts, corrupt as such transcripts could hardly fail to be, containing besides the more ordinary typographical blunders which a very careless supervision of the press allowed to remain,—affords a text sometimes bewildering in its inaccuracy.

For these reasons there is much truth in the remark of a Shakspearian critic, that "perhaps in the whole annals of English typography, there is no record of any book of any extent and any reputation having been dismissed from the press with less care and attention than the first folio." At the same time, in estimating the authority due to its text in doubtful passages, it should be borne in mind that it is the result of a comparison of several manuscript and printed copies, so far as printed copies existed at the time, carelessly, indeed, and imperfectly carried out, but still carried out, it cannot be doubted, to some extent. The players had in their hands as material for their work of collation, not only the quarto plays, but also numbers of managers' MS. copies, as well of the plays which had been published in quarto, as of those hitherto known only through the medium of the stage. Accordingly, where variances occur between the quartos and the first folio, other than such as may be due to careless and inaccurate printing, we may safely conclude that the readings given in the folio are in general the results of a comparison of the several copies which were in the possession of the editors, and a selection of what seemed to them, on consideration, the best. It is not unreasonable to suppose that on a perusal of the quarto texts, wherever a passage seemed corrupt, a collation was there made of the several copies, manuscript as well as printed, and the reading which to the editors,—men long and intimately familiar with Shakspeare's plays,—seemed genuine, was adopted into the folio; while all that did not excite their suspicion was printed off as it stood in the quartos, and so the typographical and other blunders of these in many cases reproduced. For this reason it seems to us that where the texts of the quartos and folio differ, the latter should as a general rule be preferred, as being stamped with the authority of editors not incompetent to judge, and having in their hands far more means than any previous or subsequent editors possessed for ascertaining what was more likely to be genuine.

In the second folio edition, published nine years after the first, many of the more obvious errors found in the latter were corrected, but the editor, whose ignorance and incapacity seem to have been of the most brilliant description, marred more than he mended; so that this edition is to all intents and purposes useless. In this state of things some persons,

considering all texts alike untrustworthy, have maintained that those rules which guide and confine the critic's dealings with other authors are inapplicable to the case of Shakspeare; and that conjectural emendation may here assume a wider licence than is allowed it elsewhere. "The critic," one writer says, "who takes up the work of an ordinary author—Milton, for instance—is, of course, bound by the received text. There may be misprints and errors of neglect, but they can be but few. If the editor meets with a harsh, far-fetched, unintelligible expression, his plain and only duty is to elucidate its meaning as well as he can, and to illustrate it by parallel passages from other writers. But if the editor of Shakspeare light on a similar passage, the first question which inevitably arises is whether it be corrupt or no. Not only this, but the probability fairly is that where a passage in Shakspeare is harsh or far-fetched, or unintelligible, it is corrupt, and not what Shakspeare wrote." This canon of Shakspearian criticism, however, appears to us not only startling—as indeed the writer from whom we quote admits it to be—but dangerous in the extreme, from the fact that in the nature of things it must be impossible to secure it from abuse. It renders every would-be critic his own Shakspeare. This passage appears harsh, this far-fetched, this unpoetical, this obscure—out they all go; and instead of what may perhaps be Shakspeare's, we have the smoothness and grace, the poetry and perspicuity of one who is perhaps a most meritorious and intelligent person, but no Shakspeare. There may be a considerable probability that passages which offend our ideas of what Shakspeare ought to have written, were not in fact so written by him; but the probability is infinitely greater that a conjectural reading will not restore the poet's words, except in those cases of obvious or judicious emendations of passages undeniably corrupt, which fall within the recognized and ordinary scope of the critic's duty. If it be granted that the only useful object of conjectural emendation is to restore the author's text with so high a degree of probability as to convince unprejudiced minds that his actual words have been recovered, it follows, we think, that the rules by which it is to be kept within bounds must be, in effect, the same whether the depravation of the existing text be great or little. Where the corruptness is considerable, there will no doubt be a greater probability that any given obscure passage is corrupt, but the chance that the critic will guess the true reading, without evidence to guide him, is so small as to be practically worthless. We think, therefore, that licentiousness of conjecture should be as jealously excluded from the plays of Shakspeare as from any other text into which inaccuracies may have crept from a copyist's carelessness or the errors of the press, lest sometime the student should have cause to exclaim, "*Ut olim vitii, ita nunc remediis laboratur.*" To the emendation of obvious verbal errors, as well as to the collating copies possessing an independent authority, and drawing safe or probable inferences from their discrepancies and agreements, no reasonable person can object. But further than this, all licentious conjecture is useless, in so far as it can carry no conviction with it; and directly injurious, in so far as

it may divert the minds of readers from seeking more diligently the explanation of what was perhaps obscure in appearance only. The use of a word in an obsolete or uncommon sense, instead of that which is more familiar or modern,—the referring an adjective or verb to a nearer noun instead of to one which is a little more remote,—such apparently trifling matters as these will occasionally darken or totally conceal a meaning which becomes clear and simple when once the clue to it has been discovered. That explanation which many have failed to find, one more diligent or more fortunate than his predecessors may sometimes light upon; but rash emendations of that which, though not understood, may be genuine, can only tend to render the darkness perpetual. In accordance with these views we shall now proceed to examine and attempt to explain, without the aid of conjectural emendation, some passages as to which the remarks of those commentators whom we have consulted seem to us unsatisfactory, generally preferring, where difference of text exists, the readings adopted by the editors of the first folio.

The word *cast* occurs four times in this play in a remarkable and unusual sense,—one in which the word, common as it is, is not elsewhere met with in Shakspeare. The following are the passages to which we refer :—

—the state,

However this may gall him with some check,
Can not with safety cast him.—Act i., 1.

Our general cast us thus early.—ii. 3.

You are but now cast in his mood.—ii. 3.

—whereon it came

That I was cast.—v. 2.

In the first passage it is applied to Othello's possible dismissal from office by the state, for the offence of carrying off Brabantio's daughter; in the second, to Othello's dismissal of his guests at the close of an entertainment; in the third and fourth, to Cassio's being dismissed from his lieutenancy, or cashiered. Dr. Johnson's note on the first passage is—"That is *dismiss* him, *reject* him. We still say a *cast* coat, and a *cast* serving-man." On the second, he says, "Our general cast us—that is, *appointed* us to our stations. To *cast* the play is, in the stile of the theatres, to assign to every actor his proper part." Steevens, however, observes, "Perhaps *cast* us only means dismissed us, or *got rid of* our company. So in the *Witch*, a MS. tragi-comedy by Middleton—

— she cast off

My company betimes to-night by tricks."

It is not necessary to weigh scrupulously the respective merits of these different explanations, since we can agree fully with neither. That of Dr. Johnson seems forced and improbable, and we think with Steevens that the word is used here in the same sense as in the three other passages. The quotation from Middleton, however, goes no way towards explaining this use, for "to cast off one's company" is a very different thing from

casting off the person himself, and certainly throws no light on such a phrase as "casting the person;" indeed it seems impossible to obtain the signification either of dismissing from office, or of a host courteously dismissing his guests, from the verb in its sense "to throw," without undue harshness and violence. Of the phrases cited in Dr. Johnson's note on the first passage, "cast clothes" is no doubt a shortened form of the expression "cast-off clothes," in which the participle is used in its natural and proper sense; while as to a "cast serving-man," we can say nothing, having never to our recollection met with the phrase. In it the word may have been used in the same signification of dismissal from office as in the passages on which we are commenting; or it may be a contemptuous metaphor borrowed from the ordinary expression, "cast clothes"—the serving-man being spoken of as something equally worthless with a garment which has been worn out and flung aside. It does not, however, seem possible to speak in this manner of a "cast general," or a "cast lieutenant," or "cast guests," save in a vulgar-familiar or slang form of expression, of the use of which there is no appearance in any of the passages under consideration. Before offering a conjecture as to the origin of the phrase, we will mention another use of the word "cast," which we at one time thought might perhaps explain the difficulty: this is in the expressions "cast in a suit," "cast in damages," "cast by a jury," in which old law dictionaries explain the word by the Latin verb *condemnari*. This use of "cast" comes, we think, not from the sense "thrown" as a wrestler, and therefore defeated, as it is generally explained, but from the law Latin term *cassari*, "to be quashed" or "annulled," properly used of legal proceedings, as in the entering on the roll a *cassetur breve*, "let the writ be quashed," where the plaintiff cannot deny that the defendant's answer is both true and sufficient to abate his declaration, and in the derived French law-terms *casser* and *cassation*. From being used of legal proceedings it may have come to be applied to persons who were defeated in their suits, and so may perhaps have been transferred from unsuccessful suitors dismissed from court to persons dismissed on any occasion, in which improper or metaphorical sense the word may be employed in *Othello*. On considering, however, that Shakspeare uses it thus in this one play, and in the mouths of soldiers only, it is worth while examining whether it may not be a purely military phrase, applied properly to the being cashiered, and in the one passage where *Othello* is said "to cast" his guests, by a metaphor natural on a soldier's lips, to any sort of dismissal, more especially when that dismissal is by the general. We do accordingly find that the Latin *cassari* was thus used. Ducange cites from the *Regimina Padue*, ad annum 1318, the following passage, in which the word means to be dismissed from military service, or cashiered: "*Facta fuit pax;—et tunc cassati fuerunt soldati,—et cassatus fuit suprascriptus capitaneus.*" From the Latin this military signification was adopted as one of the meanings of the French derivative verb *casser*; and it is well known that most of our early English terms of law, war, and the chase came by Norman importation from France.

Accordingly we have, through that channel, from *casser*, "to casseer," "to cashier," "to cashire," "to cash," "to quash," and "to cass:" all different forms of the same verb. We may perhaps, in referring "cast" to this origin, be met by an objection taken from the first of the passages in *Othello* in which it is found,—

—the state

Cannot with safety cast him,—

that if our view were correct, the verb, being in the infinitive mood, ought to be "cass" or "cash," not "cast." The answer is that the infinitive mood and present tense, being far more rarely used than the participle, soon became unknown in their true form. Accordingly, when an infinitive or a present tense was required, one was taken from the participle, which instead of "cassed" may in process of time have come to be written "cast," as "passed" was changed into "past;" and this confounding of the infinitive with the participle may have been assisted by the analogy of the more familiar "cast," "to throw," in which verb those parts have the same form. Though this word is so rarely found with the shortened spelling, it is by no means uncommon in early English in its longer form, "cassed." For instance, in a state paper of the time of Henry VIII. :—"For aunser wherunto His Highnes requyreth your Lordship to depeche from thens all such capitains with their officers as you wrote be *cassed*, for His Majeste knoweth not how to employe the same. Nevertheles, if there be any capitain of the *cassed*, which is a special man of service, His Majeste wold ere your Lordship dischardge him be advertised of him" (11 *State Papers*, 57). It may be worth while observing that a passage in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* shows that the word "cashier" was sometimes employed in Shakspeare's time to signify simply "to turn out:"—

Bardolph.—And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashiered ;

that is, Slender being drunk was put out of the house. Similarly, perhaps, *Othello* is said "to cast" his guests without its being necessarily meant that he cashiered them in the strict sense of the word.

In Act i. 3, the folio reads —

No, when light-winged toys
Of feathered Cupid seal with wanton dulness
My speculative and officed instruments,

for which the quarto has —

—when light-winged toys
And feathered Cupid foils with wanton dulness
My speculative and active instruments.

The commentators explain "speculative instruments" to mean "the eyes," but it is questionable whether this interpretation will bear scrutiny. The word "speculation" does indeed always in Shakspeare mean either the faculty or the act of seeing, but "speculative," in the only other passage in which it is found, certainly refers to the action of the mind—

Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate.—*Macbeth*, v. 4.

We think that it has this sense here, and that "my speculative instrument" means "the reasoning faculty with which I am provided." "Officed instrument" is to our ears somewhat harsh, but would doubtless signify the faculty to which the discharge of the duties of office is intrusted—that is, the mind. The reading of the quarto may by some be thought more simple and natural, affording as it does an obvious antithesis, the speculative and active instruments being the instruments of thought and action, *i. e.* the mind and the body; but no doubt the editors of the folio did not select the reading they have preferred without good reason.

Iago.—Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you : provoke him that he may ; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny ; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again, but by the displanting Cassio.—ii. 2.

Dr. Johnson gives the following explanation of the phrase, "Whose qualification shall come into no true taste again." "Whose resentment shall not be so qualified, or tempered, as to be well tasted,—as not to retain some bitterness." Steevens suggests, "Perhaps qualification means fitness to preserve good order, or the regularity of military discipline," a suggestion which may be dismissed without comment. Dr. Johnson is to a certain extent right in his explanation. The verb "to qualify" is continually used by Shakspeare in the sense "to soften down and weaken the peculiar quality of anything by mixing with it something of an opposite nature or quality." Thus wine is qualified by water ; harsh judgment by charity ; the fire of passion by wise counsel. Hence the word comes to signify absolutely "to mitigate," "to appease ;" for instance, in *King John*, v. 1. :—

This inundation of mistempered humour
Rests by you only to be qualified.

From the things, or qualities, which are so modified the word is transferred in its use to *persons* in whom they exist, as in *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3. :—

Your discontenting father strive to qualify
And bring him up to liking.

The *true taste* is the orderly and peaceful course of things, a metaphor taken no doubt from strong wine deprived of its fire and strength by water, and thus qualified to suit the taste. The last clause of the passage then means, "Who shall not be appeased and brought to a quiet and orderly state again."

Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice whom I trace
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip ;
Abuse him to the Moor in the right garb,
For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too.—ii. 1

Such is the reading of the folio : the quarto reads *crush* instead of *trace*, and *rank* instead of *right*. We shall not attempt to enumerate the

explanations which have been proposed for the second and third of these lines : let the reader who is curious on this subject consult the note on the passage in the *Variorum Shakspeare*. The principal modern editors, —with the exception of Mr. Knight, who retains the readings of the folio,—change the second line to

If this poor trash of Venice whom I trash,

and instead of *right garb*, read with the quarto *rank garb*.

The adopted reading in the former portion of the passage is thus explained : “ If this contemptible and worthless Venetian, whom I chide and repress for being too eager in the chase, will wait patiently till I urge him on at the proper moment,” &c. The word *trash* is taken as a hunting term, signifying to restrain those hounds which are too forward or impatient, and is used in the *Tempest* in the sense here assigned to it :—

Being once perfected how to grant suits,
How to deny them ; whom to advance, and who
To trash for overtopping.—i. 2.

There are, however, several objections which seem to us almost conclusive against this ingenious reading and explanation. First, the substitution of *trash* for *trace*, or *crush*, is without a particle of authority, unless it be thought to derive support from the possibility of constructing it by engrafting the *crush* of the quarto upon the *trace* of the folio,—a truly novel method in criticism ! Secondly, the repetition of the word *trash* is offensive. It has been remarked, as to this objection, that such playing upon words is in Shakspeare's manner ; but this is only partially true, and does not apply here. In some of Shakspeare's plays it is, no doubt, very common—too much so for the taste of the present age ; but in others, it scarcely occurs at all. *Othello* is a play of the latter class ; and it seems hardly reasonable to argue that, because the hangers-on of courts are made to interlard their speech with such quips and quiddities, similar conceits should not be thought out of place in the language of the camp. Thirdly, up to this time, Iago has *not* had occasion to repress the ardour of Roderigo, but, on the contrary, both in this very scene, and in all their conversations hitherto, has been stimulating and encouraging him to prosecute his suit with zeal and confidence ; it is only subsequently that the dupe becomes impatient from a suspicion that he has been fooled. Fourthly, the use of the word *stand* in the sense of *await patiently*, is without precedent in the plays of Shakspeare, or elsewhere, so far as we can discover. The nearest approach to this signification is where the word is used for *to withstand*, *to confront*, as in *Cymbeline*,—“ The villain would not stand me ;” and in *Richard III.*,—“ I will stand the hazard of the die.” But this usage cannot justify such phrases as *I stand his arrival*, or, *I stand your convenience*, in the sense of awaiting. Fifthly, the reading of the folio admits of an easy explanation, and change is, therefore, unnecessary. We would interpret the passage thus, retaining the reading *trace* : “ If this worthless Venetian whom I follow and watch to urge him

to keenness in the pursuit, will but *bear* the instigation without shrinking or recoiling, I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip." The verb *to trace* is repeatedly found in Shakspeare with the meaning, *to follow closely*; and in *I. Henry IV.*, we have it used, as here, of following a person:—

And bring him out, that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art,
And hold me pace in deep experiments.—iii. 1.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* we find an authority for *to stand*, in the sense *to bear or endure*—

To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat.—i. 4.

In the fifth line of the passage we are discussing, we think that the reading of the folio,

Abuse him to the Moor in the right garb,

admits of a satisfactory explanation, when considered in connection with the following line,

For I fear Cassio with my, &c.

Iago was accusing Cassio falsely, yet in the right garb or character, for, even though innocent as far as the Moor was concerned, he was probably guilty as against Iago of the very kind of offence of which he was accused.

Now my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love has turned almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch:
Three else of Cyprus,—noble swelling spirits
That hold their honours in a wary distance—
The very elements of this warlike isle,
Have I to-night flustered with flowing cups
And they watch too.—ii. 3.

The quarto reads "Three lads of Cyprus," which is intolerable. The passage, as found in the folio, seems to us so simple that we should not offer any remarks on it, but that many commentators appear to have thought it unintelligible. Malone and Steevens prefer the reading *lads*. Singer and Collier think *else* undoubtedly corrupt, and the latter adopts into his text the MS. corrector's emendation, "Three elfs of Cyprus"—a reading which can hardly be surpassed in whimsicality at least, whatever its other merits or demerits may be. "Roderigo," says Iago, "has caroused deeply, and is to keep watch to-night. Three others" (taking *else* as a pronoun) or "three besides" (taking it as an adverb) "natives of Cyprus, have also been made drunk by me, and are to watch too." If authority for this use of *else* is required, we have in *King John*,—

I bring you witnesses
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed.

Bast. Bastards and else.—ii. 1.

and such phrases as *nothing else, something else*, are common.

Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou by that small hurt hast cashiered Cassio :
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.—ii. 3.

On this passage Dr. Johnson comments as follows :—"Of many different things, all planned with the same skill, and promoted with the same diligence, some must succeed sooner than others, by the order of nature. Everything cannot be done at once; we must proceed by the necessary gradation. We are not to despair of slow events any more than of tardy fruits, while the causes are in regular progress, and the fruits *grow fair against the sun*. Hammer has not, I think, rightly conceived the sentiment, for he reads,—

Those fruits which blossom first are not first ripe.

I have, therefore, drawn it out at length, for there are few to whom that will be easy which was difficult to Hammer."

Malone remarks that the "blossoming" referred to is the removal of Cassio, and that Dr. Johnson is therefore wrong in thinking the schemes of Iago and Roderigo to be compared to tardy fruits. He does not, however, suggest any explanation as to what those things are which "grow fair against the sun," the only obscurity in the passage. The train of thought is this,—“Though the plans of other men may progress pleasantly and agreeably to themselves, like fruits ripening full in the sunshine; whereas yours have not done so thus far, since you have been beaten by Cassio; yet, on the other hand, your designs have the promise contained in an early blossoming, since you have already succeeded in the first step, namely, in having Cassio cashiered, and the earliest blossom betokens the earliest fruit.”

And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more :
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just
They're close dilations, working from the heart
That passion cannot rule.—iii. 3.

In this passage the quarto reads *close denotements*, changed by the editors of the folio into *close dilations*, which is probably the true reading. Dr. Johnson, however, "ingeniously" altered this to *close delations*, on the ground, it would seem, that *dilations*, meaning *full expositions* or *amplifications*, neither agrees with the context nor makes sense; and modern editors have universally adopted the conjectural reading. It appears to us, however, that *dilations* both agrees with the context and makes sense, at least as well as *delations*. Othello complains that Iago, having "shut up in his brain some horrible conceit," the existence of which he betrays at one time by an exclamation, at another by some short phrase of disapproval, pauses without disclosing his entire thought. He is, in fact,

speaking of Iago's evasions, or puts-off—*stops* he has just called them—and this is the exact meaning of *dilations*. Some commentators—and among them, probably, Dr. Johnson—have confounded this word with *dilatations*, which means *amplifications, enlargements*; but the two are totally distinct, the former being derived from the Latin *differre*, in its meaning of “to put off;” the latter from *dilatare*, “to make broad,” “to expand.” We understand Othello to say, “These pauses are but mysterious evasions, to which the prudence and discretion of a heart that passion cannot rule constrain you.” *Dilations* seems even to agree better with the context than the conjectural reading. The *dilation* would naturally be said to spring from a heart which could control rash impulses; the *delation* from one readily moved to passion; but the *close delation*, the mysterious charge, half spoken, half suppressed, from the treacherous and plotting brain of one who, in the words of P. Syrus,

Factum tacendo crimen acrius facit.

This is, no doubt, precisely what Iago desires to do; but Shakspeare did not mean Othello to form so just an estimate of the arch-traitor's character at this stage of the action.

Iago. O beware, my lord, of jealousy.

It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock

The meat it feeds on.—iii. 3.

We will add but little to the enormous amount of comment which this passage has elicited. The food of jealousy is love, which it mocks, or treats with despute and indignity; for mockery is not always in Shakspeare's language to be understood in a merely playful sense. This view receives support from the similar expression in Act v. 2:—

O mistress, villany hath made mocks with love!

Exchange me for a goat,

When I shall turn the business of my soul

To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,

Matching thy inference.—iii. 3.

We think it extremely unlikely that the disputed word, *exsufflicate*, is, as commentators say, to be explained by the ecclesiastical term, *exsufflare*, which signified the symbolical blowing out of the breath whereby, in certain religious ceremonies, the renouncing that which was sinful was expressed. The Latin verb *sufflare* means “to puff out, to inflate,” as in *sufflare buccas*, “to puff out the cheeks;” it is, accordingly, the proper word to express the blowing up of bubbles. *Exsufflare* would mean to blow up to a large size; and *exsufflate* surmises would be, in this sense, not only an intelligible, but even a strictly appropriate phrase. Shakspeare, like most other writers of his day, affected words of a Latin aspect and sound, nor was he over particular about perfect accuracy in their formation when there was a gain to be made in respect of rhythm and metrical fulness by neglecting it. On this principle it is that we have, not only the word we are considering, but similar lengthened formations, such as *vastidity* for *vastity*,

impercevant for *imperceivant* or *unperceiving*. We think that *exsufflicate* and *blown* (or *blow'd*) are two epithets of nearly the same signification, joined, for additional weight and force, with a single substantive, after Shakspeare's manner. In this same play we have, for instance, "a capable and wide revenge," "an extravagant and wheeling stranger"—the reading "wheedling" is ludicrous—and similarly in *Hamlet*, "the extravagant and erring spirit;" but the usage is too common to stand in need of illustration. *Exsufflicate* and *blown* surmises are, as a Greek writer might say, *ἰκόνισται ὑπὸ λογχοῖ καὶ ἐκπνευστήναι*,—empty suspicions blown up like bubbles. We find that this view is supported by the authority of Richardson's *Dictionary*, but we cannot agree that *exsufflicate* is probably an error for *exsufflate*; the metre and the coincidence of texts sufficiently disprove this.

Cassio. 'Prithee, bear some charity to my wit, do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha.

Othello. So, so, so, so. They laugh that win. (*Aside*)

Iago. Why, the cry goes that you marry her.

Cassio. 'Prithee say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Othello. Have you scored me? Well. (*Aside*).—iv. 1.

Johnson explains "Have you scored me?" to signify *Have you made my reckoning? Have you settled the term of my life?* Steevens, remarking that "to score" meant originally to cut a notch upon a tally, or, to indent a form upon any substance, and citing Spenser to this effect, explains it here as being used figuratively, and meaning to set a brand or mark of disgrace upon a person, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Let us score their backs." Malone is rather of opinion that our poet was thinking of the ignominious punishment of slaves. Singer thinks *scored* the true reading, and *scored* unintelligible. It is quite manifest, however, we think, that *Othello* is referring to—perhaps, indeed, continuing—his last words, "They laugh that win;" and that *score* is used in its common signification of marking the points won towards the game: "You have gained the victory over me, and won the game. Have you scored my defeat?"

Put out the light!

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me:—but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume.—v. 2.

This passage seems to have so impressed Shelley's imagination that he has introduced a wonderfully close imitation of it into his magnificent tragedy, the *Cenci*. Indeed, he must have been very deeply imbued in Shakspearian reading at the time when this drama was written, if we may judge from the extraordinary number of plagiarisms, no doubt unintentional, from Shakspeare's plays which are found in it. As attention has never, so far as we are aware, been directed to these by any writer, we venture to point out some of the most remarkable. The passage which

we have cited is thus imitated. At the hour fixed for his father's murder, Giacomo addresses his dying lamp as follows :—

O

Thou un replenished lamp ! whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers ! Thou small flame
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been ! So wastes and sinks
Even now perhaps the life that kindled mine :
But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh.

And afterwards, lighting the lamp,—

And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume
My father's life,—Act iii. 2.

In the third scene of the first act, Cenci thus apostrophizes wine which he is drinking :—

Be thou the resolution of quick youth
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,
And age's firm, cold, subtle villany.

Compare with this a passage in *Richard III.* :—

Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy ;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious ;
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous ;
Thy age confirmed, proud, subtle, sly, and bloody.—iv. 4.

Here it is not precisely in the words that we find the resemblance, but there is an unmistakable imitation of the idea. The same remark applies to the resemblance between the following passages :—

Oresino. You cannot say
I urged you to the deed.

Giacomo. O, had I never
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance
The mirror of my darkest thoughts ; hadst thou
Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thoughts, until it grew
Familiar to desire—*Cenci*, v. 1.

and—

How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done ! Hadst thou not been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted, and signed to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind :
But taking note of thy abhorred aspect,
Finding thee fit for bloody villany,
Apt, liable to be employed in danger,
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death.—*King John*, iv. 2.

Sometimes we have, in part, the exact words of the passage in Shakspeare

which had impressed the modern poet's mind ; for instance, Beatrice exclaims,—

Ay, something must be done,
What yet I know not,—something which shall make
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it.—*Cenci*, iii. 1.

Who is not reminded of Lear's burst of passion ?—

I will do such things—
What they are yet I know not, but they shall be
The terrors of the earth.—*Lear*, ii. 4.

In another part of the play we find Beatrice saying,—

How fearful ! To be nothing ! Or to be
What ? O where am I ? Let me not go mad !
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts.—*Cenci*, v. 4.

Similarly, Lear exclaims,—

O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet Heaven !

The coincidence here is both curious and remarkable, on account of the words "sweet Heaven" being in the modern play joined with the sentence following the prayer against madness, while in *Lear* they form part of the prayer. Evidently the flow and cadence had unconsciously lingered in Shelley's ear, and so the words were reproduced by him in their sequence, though disunited in their sense. Earlier in the same speech Beatrice, expressing her shuddering repugnance at the idea of approaching death, says,—

My God ! can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly ? So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting wormy ground !

Compare with this Claudio's words, on a similar occasion, in *Measure for Measure* :—

Ay, but to die and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot.—iii. 1.

In an earlier scene in the *Cenci* a song is introduced by these lines,—

Come, I will sing you some low sleepy tune,
Not cheerful nor yet sad ; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin
Till they almost forget they live.

Who is not gladly reminded of the prelude to the song, "Come away, death," in *Twelfth Night*, so inimitable in its exquisite simplicity and dainty blending of sweetness with melancholy ?

O fellow, come, the song we had last night :—
Mark it, Cesario ; it is old and plain ;
The spinsters, and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids, that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chaunt it : it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age.—ii. 4.

We have called these unconscious plagiarisms, and such we have no doubt they were. It is, indeed, scarcely possible that any one should knowingly venture to imitate, in so undisguised a manner, and so frequently in the same piece, a poet who is in every one's hands; and even some of that poet's most familiar passages. Shelley has himself stated that the only intentional plagiarism in the whole play is from an idea in Calderon's *Purgatorio del San Patricio*, which is introduced into Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder; and no one who considers the absolute truthfulness of Shelley's nature can doubt that he wrote this in good faith. Indeed, the statement will be easily believed by any one who has given his attention to this subject of unconscious plagiarism, so curiously close sometimes are imitations of favourite authors by writers who have evidently made them without any "guilty knowledge." We have said so much on the subject already, that we shall content ourselves with citing one more instance, taken from the works of the present poet laureate; at which, if his attention has ever been directed to it, we are convinced that no one has felt more surprise than the author himself. In the well-known Swallow song, one of the most admired stanzas is,—

O were I thou that she might take me in
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

This certainly bears a remarkably close resemblance to an exquisite stanza in *Venus and Adonis*:—

Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;
'Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right:
Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:
There shall not be one minute in an hour,
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.

— Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder?—v. 2.

This passage means, as Malone explains, "Are there no missiles in heaven but those which are used for the thunder? Has heaven not one superfluous bolt to cast at this wretch?" Steevens is certainly wrong in understanding the question to be, "Are there no minor degrees of punishment more suited to the offences of mortals than the thunder?" It may, perhaps, be thought that the word *stones* was suggested by Juvenal's—

saxa decrum
Hæc et tela putant,

which would support the view taken by Steevens, as the Roman poet is speaking of diseases and such visitations as being the *stones* or missiles of the Gods; but the expression *thunder-stones* is found elsewhere in Shakspeare as an equivalent for *thunder-bolt*. For instance, in *Cymbeline*, iv. 2,—

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;—

and in *Henry V.* i. 2, we find the bullets discharged from guns called *gunstones*. This last word probably points out the origin of the phrase.

Then shall you speak
Of one that loved, not wisely, but too well ;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme ; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.—v. 2.

The commentators have been so fully occupied by the controversy whether *Indian* or *Judean* be the true reading, that no attention has been given to another difficulty. Assuming, as we do, that *Indian* is undoubtedly right, how are we to explain, *richer than all his tribe* ? The received interpretation, that the pearl was worth more than the wealth of all the Indian's kindred does not seem satisfactory. In the first place, it requires us to suppose an inelegant ambiguity, and even impropriety, in the employment of the single adjective *rich* with two entirely different meanings. A *pearl* is said to be *rich* in the sense that it is *valuable*, or *precious* ; a *tribe*, in the sense that it is *wealthy*. The sentence would then, in this way of viewing it, be an awkward and confused mode of saying "a pearl, the value of which was greater than the wealth of all the Indian's tribe." In the next place, it is not clear why the wealth of this base (that is, uncivilized or savage) Indian's tribe should be fixed on as an appropriate measure of value, while he himself was so ignorant of what was valuable as to throw away so precious a pearl. These difficulties are removed by a very simple explanation. The word *his* does not, in our opinion, refer to the Indian, but is the genitive of the neuter pronoun, and *tribe* is, by an ordinary poetic licence, used for kindred or kind. Thus the pearl is said to be richer than all *its* kind,—more precious than all other pearls. In this way we have an apt comparison for Desdemona, who, now that the Moor was convinced of her innocence, was to him peerless amongst women. It is scarcely necessary to remark that *his*, the original genitive of *it*, was continually used in Shakspeare's time, and even much later, instead of its more modern substitute. Let one instance out of many suffice :—

Hearing you praised, I say 'tis so, 'tis true,
And to the most of praise add something more ;
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.

Shakspeare Sonnet, 85.

Whether Shakspeare meant to make Othello a veritable negro, is a question which has been warmly discussed. In America feeling has run so high on the subject that the noble Moor has even been personated there by an actor who appeared with a white face. Very possibly the indignation of a negro-hating audience might have rendered a black one dangerous to its bearer. In this less excitable country, though we have never gone to so extreme a length, yet in the make-up of actors a considerable diversity of opinion has been manifest as to the precise degree of

blackness in which the royal Moor should be presented to the British public. All varieties of shade have from time to time found favour, from the most uncompromising jet to the very faintest hue of brown by which "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun" can be represented.

The strict Shakspearian has generally been disposed to insist on the full measure of blackness, but the weaker crowd have never heartily favoured the idea of a union between the beautiful Italian and one whose complexion seems to them inconsistent with sentiment though not "incompatible with freedom." Negro patriots, negro lecturers, negro philanthropists, not to speak of Christy minstrels, are well enough; even a negro bishop may be regarded as not unbecoming the lawn; but, sooth to say, a negro Othello need never expect more than a hollow and doubtful popularity in this country. Coleridge in his Shakspearian lectures not only combats the necessity of holding the negro doctrine, but emphatically enumerates amongst his reasons this feeling of repugnance. He argues that Othello is not a negro, because he "fetches his life and being from men of royal siege," and this at a time when negroes were only known as slaves; secondly he insists that Roderigo's words

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,

must only be regarded as the malicious exaggeration of a rival, who affects to confound Moors and negroes. Finally he urges that it would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance in Desdemona that she should love a negro, which Shakspeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated. This last reason, meaning in reality nothing more than repugnance to the idea of Desdemona's love being a negro, is plainly the true one, without which we should never have had the question raised.

Notwithstanding the authority of Coleridge, strenuously supported as he is by Mr. Charles Knight, there can be little doubt that Shakspeare meant his Moor to be a negro both in colour and features. In the first place, we have in the play itself a series of passages which, taken separately, may perhaps be more or less successfully explained away, but taken together form an overwhelming mass of proof. To begin with, there are Roderigo's words, which Coleridge cites,

What a full fortune does the thick lips owe;

and which we think cannot be explained away as a rival's exaggeration, for a reason which we shall presently mention. Subsequently, he is termed by Iago an "old black ram." Brabantio's first idea, on finding that his daughter has eloped with the Moor, is that she must have been wrought to do so by sorcery; and he explains his reason for this:—

I'll refer me to all things of sense
(If she in chains of magic were not bound),
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned

The wealthy, curled, darlings of our nation,
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou,—to fear, not to delight.

Again, before the Duke and Senate, he urges the same charge on the same grounds :—

She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
 By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks :
 For nature so preposterously to err,
 Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
 Sans witchcraft could not.

Making every allowance for the grief and anger of a father whose daughter has fled with a lover displeasing to him, these words, gravely urged before the highest judicial body, and gravely listened to and entertained by them, are not applicable to one who differed merely in shade of complexion, but not materially in features, from the inhabitants of the country. Desdemona herself, when accounting for her loving the Moor, has nothing to say in favour of his personal appearance. Her sole reference to what is alleged against him on that ground simply abandons the point as not susceptible of argument. She can only say :—

I saw Othello's visage in his mind,

Iago, when encouraging Roderigo to persevere in his suit to Desdemona, argues that her affections cannot be constant to her lord, for, says he, "Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she have to look on the Devil?" Even when conversing with Othello himself, he does not hesitate to dwell on the Moor's ill favour as a matter patent to all, and undeniable :—

As, to be bold with you,
 Not to affect many proposed matches
 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree ;
 —Foh ! one may smell in such a will most rank,
 Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural,—
 I may fear,
 Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
 May fall to match you with her country forms,
 And, happily, repent.

It would almost seem as if this passage had suggested to Coleridge his assertion that Shakspeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated a *disproportionateness*, a want of balance, in Desdemona, such as love for a negro would imply. It certainly does not bear him out in this view, but even seems strongly opposed to it. Iago, though a liar in grain, is far too skilful to build his insidious reasonings and suggested conclusions on premisses which are not at least plausible.

But let us hear Othello's own testimony on this matter :—

 If I do prove her haggard,
 Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
 I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
 To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black,
 And have not those soft parts of conversation
 That chamberers have

and afterwards :—

My name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face.

In the next place, not in this play only, but wherever Shakspeare mentions Moors, he invariably speaks of them as negroes. In the *Merchant of Venice*, Portia says of the Prince of Morocco—another Moor of “royal siege”—“If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.” In another passage of the same play, Act iii. 5, *negro* and *Moor* are actually used as convertible terms. There can be no doubt that in *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron the Moor is meant to be a negro. He is “a coal-black Moor.” A fly is described as—

A black ill-favoured fly,
Like to the empress' Moor.

His child is—

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue.
—a babe as loathsome as a toad,

and is called by its father “a thick-lipped slave;” whence we may conclude that the similar epithet applied to Othello is not meant for a malicious exaggeration, as Coleridge maintains, but as a description supposed to be applicable to all persons of Moorish race. It is of no consequence as to this question, whether we consider *Titus Andronicus* a genuine play of Shakspeare's or not. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that in Shakspeare's time a Moor was popularly understood to be “a negro,” a “black-a-moor”—the precise interpretation of the word which is found in so late a work as Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary*.

Finally, the uncomeliness of Othello's visage is essential to the probability of the plot. For the utter overthrow of that “constant, loving, noble nature,” not only an appearance of the most complete and overwhelming proof is necessary, but it is also requisite that his mind should be predisposed to receive this apparent evidence without suspecting that it may be forged or illusory. This preparation is effected, and the improbability, which would otherwise be a blemish on the plot, guarded against by Iago's insidiously urging on him two considerations: first, that Desdemona, having deceived her father, might be not incapable of deceiving her husband; and, secondly, that his unlovely exterior was ill calculated to fix her affections permanently, and that her very preference of such a lover to her other suitors showed a rank will and disproportionate mind. Of Shakspeare's care, as well as consummate art, in providing that the development of his plots shall not be wanting in probability, we have a remarkable instance in this very case. The first seed of suspicion is sown in Othello's mind long before the fatal complication and catastrophe can be foreseen or even conjectured by the reader or spectator. At the very time when Desdemona has declared openly her entire devotion, when

Othello's confidence in her faith and affection are unbounded, her father, utters this warning:—

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see ;
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

The words, for the moment, pass almost unheeded, but in time they take root and yield a deadly harvest.

Schlegel goes so far as to hold that Shakspeare meant not only to invest Othello with the personal attributes, but also to endow him with the moral characteristics of a negro. "What a fortunate mistake," he remarks, "that the Moor—under which name in the original novel a baptized Saracen of the northern coast of Africa was unquestionably meant—has been made by Shakspeare in every respect a negro! We recognise in Othello the wild nature of that glowing zone which generates the most ravenous beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons, tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honour, and by nobler and milder manners. His jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object; it is of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has given birth to the disgraceful confinement of women, and many other unnatural usages. A drop of this poison flows in his veins, and sets his whole blood in the wildest ferment. The Moor seems frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him; and he is all this, and moreover a hero who spurns at danger, a worthy leader of an army, a faithful servant of the state; but the mere physical force of passion puts to flight in one moment all his acquired and mere habitual virtues, and gives the upper hand to the savage over the moral man." We cannot, however, believe that the poet had any intention of assimilating his hero morally to even so highly ideal a negro as the eminent critic has evolved from the depths of his consciousness. In Cinthio's tale Shakspeare found a Moor, which to the English ear meant negro, and accordingly the hero of the drama founded on that story is externally a negro. Little or nothing, however, was popularly known in Shakspeare's day as to the negro being unlike the European in his moral and intellectual constitution, and therefore in his moral and intellectual constitution Othello is a European. In this "loving, constant, noble nature," wise and moderate in rule, calm and fearless in danger, "not easily jealous, but being wrought, perplexed in the extreme," we can see nothing which is distinctively negro. Even assuming that the ideal negro may possess all these qualities, yet surely not even Exeter Hall will deny that the ideal European may claim to possess them in an equal degree.

Besides the repugnance, more generally felt than expressed, to a negro being the hero of a love story, there is at the present day another cause why *Othello*, as an acting play, can hardly be popular with persons of cultivated taste; namely, the coarse impersonation of the principal character now adopted on the stage. Scarcely any one who in the solitude of his study has conjured up airy tongues and shadowy forms, and beheld this terrible drama enacted by the creatures of his phantasy, can endure

patiently the shock which his illusions receive, when he expects his ideal to be realised in the theatre. As a reader, he had found in *Othello* a grave dignity and a grandeur of bearing, broken occasionally by bursts of tragic passion: as a spectator he witnesses a strange and far from dignified combination of hysterical cries and epileptic convulsions; as if the malady invented by Iago was not only real but incessant, from the first moment in which the seeds of suspicion have been sown. It is plain that Shakspeare did not intend the Moor to shake and rave in the extraordinary manner which is now familiar to us, either before or during the scene in which he taxes Desdemona with no longer possessing the fatal handkerchief. Indeed, his perturbation on that occasion is ascribed by Iago to State matters of moment,—an explanation which neither Desdemona nor her companion Emilia regards as improbable or inadequate. So extravagant, however, is the reading of the part now in vogue that the utter and ludicrous insufficiency of the cause suggested has necessarily the effect of drawing a laugh from the audience, who not unnaturally regard it as a touch of comic humour. In the fourth act, no doubt, the expression of passion must be so intense as to tax severely the actor's powers; but the spasms and contortions of physical disease can never be properly substituted for the signs of mental emotion.

With respect to the manner in which the catastrophe is wrought out, *Othello*—as in even a greater degree one other drama of Shakspeare's—is akin to the purest Attic, rather than to the Romance school of tragedy. In the latter the tragic event is brought about by the ungovernable passions of men—by a tyrant's rage, by blind revenge, by unbridled ambition, or by such ordinary human motives or human sins. In the Grecian drama it is otherwise. Here the bravest and most noble of the human race are brought forward to teach the stern doctrine that courage, virtue, wisdom, all that can raise the best of men above their kind, are weak and bootless to resist the will of fate and force of circumstance. Sin is not voluntary, nor misfortune to be shunned; but men walk blindfold on the verge of an awful precipice, into which a single darkling step may plunge them. The only signs to which they can look to guide their way are themselves delusive; oracular intimations of the will of heaven—terrible, mysterious, and never rightly understood till too late; so that those mortals who are weak or pious enough to take them for guides invariably rush into the destruction which they sought to avoid. On this stage the world and its contents are but

A chaos of mishaps,
In which, as in a glass, we plainly see
That all man's life is but a tragedy.

There are, it is true, brighter spots in the picture—calamities steadfastly, heroically borne, soul-stirring sentiments which strike the noblest chords of our nature, glorious songs of piety, patriotism, and liberty; but the impression of the whole is stern and depressing; it is the awful drama of irresistible doom and helpless man.

So in the character of Othello we find constancy and courage, wisdom and self-control. By his noble and heroic qualities he has arrived at the pinnacle of honour and happiness; but at the very moment of his reaching this height a gloomy presentiment prepares us for a coming and disastrous change.

If it were now to die,

he says, at the instant of his most perfect happiness and highest earthly fortune,

'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

From this moment, indeed, the web of destiny begins to close around him. We cannot see that the cause of his approaching ruin is within his own hands; it is rather the Nemesis which dogs excessive prosperity that drives him onward blindfold and unable to resist. On the English stage such an influence as this, if treated abstractedly, would be unintelligible; and, accordingly, we have it embodied in *Iago*, who, in his unrelenting and all but motiveless malignity, is more akin to the working of implacable doom than to humanity. By his agency incidents are so arranged or contrived, or they are so coloured by his horribly subtle suggestions, that even such a wise and noble nature as that of the Moor is crushed without a possibility of escape. He recognises himself that it is destiny which has destroyed him body and soul; at the very moment of his despair his tone and words are those of a fatalist who resigns himself calmly to the inevitable:—

O vain boast!

Who can control his fate?

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.

Indeed, without this mitigation of his crime, and the compassion for his supreme unhappiness produced by it, the repugnance of both reader and spectator at so shocking an act as the murder of Desdemona would be unendurable, and the poet would violate a rule which all true artists observe in dealing with the horrible. Even with it, the surpassing power of this most tragic of tragedies carries our emotions to the utmost degree of intensity of which art allows. The pity which it excites is not of the melting but of the painful and shuddering kind;—its pathos is the very pathos of horror. "No eloquence," says Schlegel, "could paint the overwhelming force of the catastrophe in *Othello*,—the pressure of feelings which measure out in a moment the abysses of eternity."

Summer in the Hardanger Province.

AMONG the quiet villages, which cluster round the upper waters of the Hardanger Fjord, the peasants retain their old manners, dialect, and costume more faithfully, perhaps, than in any other province of Norway. The traveller is impressed at once by the splendour of the landscape and the strangeness of the antique modes of life which linger in these secluded valleys. We shall endeavour to describe the chief features of the province, and the incidents which most impressed us during a stay of several weeks in this district; and we hope that others may be induced to follow in the footsteps of our party, or rather in the track of our boat, since in the district which we are describing they will hardly find ten miles of high road to a hundred miles of water. The Hardanger Fjord, a great arm of the sea, or long water-valley, runs inland for a hundred and twenty miles towards the bleak deserts and wild valleys of Thelemark. Something might be said of the winding strait and the precipitous islands at its mouth, of the reef of rocks where we saw five sea-eagles at once sailing round in the air and dashing at whiles into the spray, or of the walls of verdure and the level breaks of meadow which here and there interrupt the monotonous succession of stony precipices. But a more striking view is opened after leaving the narrow entrance: the fjord opens out before us, and the vast white domes of the Folgefond are seen glittering in the sunshine. This huge snow-field, which is about as large as the county of Middlesex, is supported by bold black mountains, which form the buttresses to its cupola.

Between the mountains and the sea lies, in most places, a belt of fertile land, dotted with farmhouses, painted pink or yellow, after the quaint Norwegian fashion. The only house which possesses any historical interest is the castle or manor-house of Rosendal, where Bothwell lived in exile, finding in "the storm-haunted Hardanger" a fitting resting place for his bold and turbulent spirit. The barons of Rosendal were at one time powerful nobles. Their order long ago declined, and is now extinct, but the peasants still remember stories of the pride and poverty of the last of the race of Rosendal. Some miles beyond lies the entrance to the Moranger Fjord, opposite to a well-wooded island in the centre of the main waters; the inlet leads to a narrow valley which, in the words of Professor Forbes, is "closed in by the gleaming coronet of the perpetual snow-fields of the Folgefond." Passing a promontory called Thorsnes, or the Cape of Thor, the site of a temple in old times, we come to the broadest part of the fjord, where directly opposite to the last precipices of the Folgefond lies the pretty village of Noreimsund. It is built upon the margin of a

shallow bay, in which the rocks and the drooping rowan-trees with their clusters of scarlet berries are reflected on all sides. From the mouth of the bay is seen at once the whole range of the snow-fields, and the blue ice-plains of the Halling Jökul, rising miles away above the furthest recesses of the fjord—

Les champs couverts de neige éclairés par l'Aurore,
Et les flots de cristal que le soleil colore,
Et les jökuls brillants avec leur ciel d'azur.

Icelandic travellers will remember that a *jökul* signifies the plain of ice which spreads across the plateau of a high flat-topped mountain. It is one of many words from the old language which has lingered in this district. Noreimsund, among its other attractions, possesses a waterfall, of which the natives have but a small opinion, but which is eagerly visited by many English tourists. It owes its celebrity to some mistake, as yet not clearly explained. The guide-books describe with rapture its sheer fall of seven hundred feet, and its grotto in which the traveller may safely stand between the water and the rock from which it falls, stunned by the never-ending roar, and dazzled by the prismatic light which flashes through the falling sheet of crystal. But the "magnificent Ostud-foss" is, in reality, a source of bitter disappointment to the majority of its visitors. Though there is a large body of water, the height of the fall is more like seventy than seven hundred feet, and one authority has limited it to forty feet of perpendicular descent. It is probable that the first agent for the guide-books who described its beauty was in too great a hurry to visit the spot, and trusted to the account of an imaginative peasant, or it may be that in writing up his diary an accidental cipher multiplied the true height by ten; it is rather curious that the mistake should never have been corrected, and that almost all the authors who describe the Hardanger fjord should have scrupulously perpetuated the delusion.

It would be a task without an end to describe the grandeur of the upper portions of the Hardanger. Here, as at Ullensvang, a green and fertile promontory juts out into the sea: there the desolate mountain-ranges rise abruptly from the waves with hardly a break in their cliffs for miles. In one of the finest situations lies the farm of Utne, where the kindest of peasant hostesses is always ready to welcome a party of English, and to smile at their praises of her daughter Thorbjorn, the *belle* of all the waterside. The house stands at the foot of a green Alp which overlooks the narrow reach of water by which the lowest of the glaciers and the cataracts of Skjeggedal are approached. From the slopes behind the house we could trace the main stream of the fjord for many miles, and above the cliffs could here and there catch glimpses of domes and peaks of snow. Some, as fortunate as ourselves, may note from the old lindens on the natural terrace the delicacy of the mountain forms in the transparent summer nights; or, later in the year, watch the alternate rays and

shadows of the Aurora darting across the sky. As they admire the restless meteoric motion, they will understand the meaning of the ballad-singers who gave the name of the Merry Dancers to the flickering Northern Lights.

At the end of the fjord a green bank stretches from cliff to cliff. It does not require much learning to know that this is the *moraine* of an extinct glacier, which has left its marks upon the steep rocks that surround the lake separated by this bank from the sea. Behind this lake, and in the glens which divide its mountains, we counted at least ten other *moraines*, two of which half block the two black gorges leading to the fells of Halling and Thelemark. Upon this lake, while rowing beneath a serrated ridge which they call the Devil's Teeth, we saw one morning a most picturesque procession. A water-funeral was slowly moving up to the head of the lake, four boats filled with peasants being led by a barge, which contained a shrouded coffin, and in the bow a tall black cross held aloft. The delicate outline of the cross, raised in the air and reflected in the water, met our eyes at the moment when the peasants raised their shrill and monotonous dirge. As the sound came across the lake our rowers stopped to listen. "Tis the lych-folk singing," they said, and in another minute were chattering over their birchen butter-boxes, glad of the opportunity for taking their morning meal. Soon they were again volunteering their songs, that we might hear the music echo in the hills, and striking up the chorus to their favourite, "Boer Jeg,"—"I live on the lofty fell." In the distance we could still catch some faint sound of the dirge; and their Old-English name for the mourners reminded us of the "lych-song" of our own Northern counties, the strangest of all attempts to describe the journey to the other world, "over the Bridge of Dread and across the Moor of Thorns." "When any dieth," says the Yorkshire chronicler, "certaine women sing a song to the dead bodie, recyting the journey that he must goe: and they are of belief, such is their fondnesse, that once in their lives it is good to give a pair of new shoes to a poore man, forasmuch as after this life they are to pass barefoote through a great launde full of thornes and furzen, except by the meryte of the almes aforesaid they have redeemed the forfeyte."

A short foaming river connects the lake with the fjord, on one bank of which rises a stony hill, which the villagers call Wind-shoulder, from the noise of the winter storms which whistle in its chinks and crannies. Behind the hill is the entrance to Simedal, a narrow recess in which the last waters of the Hardanger wind between enormous mountains. The giant Onin guards the entrance; but his snow-fields are hidden from travellers below, who can see no more than beetling cliffs, long cataracts, and, in one place very far up among the pines, a green lawn and tiny huts. The road to this aerial farm leads up long ladders of logs and pine-trunks, clamped into the sides of a cleft formed by the waterfall. At the end of the gorge is a green, rank meadow, through which run two streams born in the glaciers over our heads; behind it rises the dark wall of rock in

terrace upon terrace, with water glistening between the pines, then bare rocks again, and above all the bright ice of the Jökul. There was plenty of life in Simedal. So many shoals of young sea-fish came in, that the fjord was a favourite haunt of seals. Soft dog-like eyes and almost human faces would peer up through the water, or at a little distance from the boat the bearded seal would toss his head out of a wave with a shining sea-trout in his mouth. We were often visited by shoals of porpoises, and were never without our flocks of sea-birds, which breed on these cliffs in spring-time. Saddle-backs and the rare ivory-gulls skimmed by, loons dived and screamed, and the eider-ducks floated placidly about; at low tide the little shore-birds crept about upon the seaweeds in company with the lessers, auks, or a set of shrill chattering terns, from our "tern-stone" in the river. In the early morning the beauty of the place was marvellous. The dark cliffs contrast finely with the pale green tide slowly moving in or out. But an artist might find occupation in Simedal on stormy days as well as in the sunshine: then sudden storms rush down from combs between the mountains and change the colour of the fjord, or mists creep up the cliff and part suddenly again to show their stony peaks. But the finest atmospheric effects are seen there in the summer nights. Once, especially, we remember rowing up Simedal when the sky was full of the August shooting-stars, with now and then a meteor of keener brightness. The edges of the cliffs were all silvered by the moonshine, and on the northern horizon we saw that flickering pallor, which is not the Aurora, but presages its coming. We drifted along with a sense of dreamy enjoyment, until a fish leaped or some wild bird screamed, and the spell of silence was broken. At other times we spent whole days there in fishing, sketching, or listening to the songs and scraps of legend which our boatmen were never tired of repeating. One of them was somewhat of a scholar, and had read much of the Heimskringla; he would discourse to us of the old gods and the old pirates till one might almost have expected the cliff to echo once more to the harp of Thiodolf, or the hoarse war-trumpets of the Viking, whose monstrous tumulus was raised not far from our village church. The men were fond of telling us stories about the genii and familiar sprites, in which they more than half believed, and especially of the Neckar, or river-spirit, who was so fond of staying to chat with the man at the water-wheel. At other times they would regale us with stories of "sea-worms," and a prodigious serpent living in a lake "somewhere in Thelemark," and other monsters of which the world has already heard too much. One story, of a mysterious flat-fish called Brigda, was new to us, and may perhaps be worth repeating. The oldest of the fishermen declared that in his grandfather's time the cove was frequently visited by this monster, which was flat and covered with coarse hair or bristles. About fifty years ago it got among the herring-nets, and was finally destroyed by the force of the whole village, which was enriched with many barrels of oil from its liver and blubber. But since the day when the fish (probably a basking-shark) was slain, not a herring has ever visited this part of the fjord again.

All visitors to the Hardanger who love the picturesque will be pleased at the brilliancy and the variety of the costumes. Every valley, and almost every village, has its distinguishing dress, to which the peasants cling with almost a superstitious tenacity; our servants frequently expressed their great surprise that the same dress should in England be worn by the inhabitants of "different valleys;" and could hardly believe that the ladies of our party were close relations, and yet could wear dresses of a different cut and fashion. It seems, too, as if there were something half repulsive to their minds in the idea that unmarried girls should wear the same kind of bonnet as a married woman. Among the peasants the cap is one of the chief glories of matronhood; and the maiden must bind her hair with the snood, or cover it with a simple kerchief. The linen caps are the most striking articles of the costume. They are spread on frames and boards, twisted into horns, rolled into turbans, and adorned with every possible combination of frills, gophering, and mysteries of fine needlework, according to the antique fashions of the various communities. Some resemble the high caps of the Normandy country-folk, which have never changed their shape since the days of Hrolf the Ganger; others brought to our minds the quaintly-curved "faldur" or head-dress which is worn on grand occasions by the ladies of Iceland. At one village near Rosendal we were received by an old lady in green bodice with scarlet sleeves, scarlet stockings, and bright blue skirt and hanging belt. At another place a pretty farmeress was making hay among the labourers in a skirt of white linen, with a bodice of scarlet and belt of apple-green, her face being shaded from the sun by the high starched cap, as large as a parasol. Of course these fine clothes are not usually worn on work-days by the poorer villagers; but the sight on a Sunday morning was something to be admired. The churchyard was filled with the silk-aproned women in their brightest and best, chatting with hymn-book and handkerchief in hand with the men, who looked a little shy in their miniature coats, silver brooches, and embroidered pantaloons.

Long before the hour for prayers, the water had been dotted with boats decked out in boughs and flags, the rector's four-oar being distinguished by an extra profusion of bunting. The population of our village was very small; but the country-people rowed in from the distant hamlets and farms to our waterside church, where, once a month, in cassock and prodigious ruff, the rector conducted a long and monotonous service. Though said to date from the thirteenth century, the church did not contain much that was antique or interesting beyond an inscription in the later or monkish Runic, and a queer painting of the founder, a holy woman named Rikaragna, who dedicated the spot to her patron St. James. On another occasion we were fortunate enough to witness an old-fashioned wedding or *bryllup*: the word signifies the race for the bride, and alludes to the custom of marriage by capture which has been shown to have prevailed in ancient times among all the savage nations in the world. The traces of the same custom have survived in

the "Welsh weddings" of our own country, and in the ceremony of stealing the bride which prevails, or not long ago prevailed, at weddings in the country districts of the Border. "A wedding cortège in Sweden," says Mr. MacLennan, "was long after the introduction of Christianity a party of armed men, and for greater security marriages were generally performed at night. A pile of lances is said to be still preserved in the old church at Husaby in Gothland, into which were fitted torches; these weapons were borne by the groomsmen, and served the double purpose of giving light and protection." In those turbulent times every church had a rack in the porch for holding the axes and spears of the congregation, so that the lances of Husaby may not have had any special or symbolical reference to the theory of marriage by capture; but we thought that we could trace the influence of the tradition in the wedding which we attended, where the shouts and excited rushings, with the firing of guns and pistols, raised all the din and confusion of a real battle for the bride. The bride's father sat outside the house among the elders of the village with a silver spigot in his hand. Ale was served from the barrel at his side into a massive peg-tankard, inscribed with verses in the Hardanger dialect; and the bride herself, smiling through her tears, handed the stronger drinks in finely-embossed cups to all who wished to drink "Skaal" and long life to her. At last the time came for the service in a church across the water. The bridegroom no longer dangled his bonnet, but helped to push off the boats; the flags waved, the bride was embraced, and amid a parting salute from all our artillery at once, the wedding cortège departed. We had been permitted in the morning, whilst the bride's hair was being plaited in thick coils of a shape fit to receive her crown, to inspect her ornaments, which had been heirlooms in the family for several generations. The most valuable of course was the crown, silver-gilt and adorned with garnets, which was of a more massive pattern than those which we had seen in the Bergen shops; it differed from them, moreover, in being hung with gilt pendants, beads, and tufts of coloured wool. A fine breastplate, filigreed brooches, and a silver marriage-belt, complete the list of her principal adornments. The following description of the belt of a rich lady in Iceland applies exactly to that of the Hardanger bride: "The petticoat is fastened by means of a girdle nearly five feet in length, composed of a number of oblong pieces of silver about an inch and a half long and one inch wide, sewed with their extremities close together upon a piece of green velvet, so that it forms a number of joints and is easily bent round the body and fastened with a buckle: one end is suffered to hang down in front of the apron and nearly reaches the bottom of it. All the joints are gilt and beautifully ornamented with open work and raised knobs of silver." After the wedding a feast commenced which lasted for nearly three days, as far as we could judge by the succession of jaded revellers who returned in scattered boat-loads from the bride's new home across the water. The king of the feast was her father, who boasted afterwards of the strength of mind and body

which had enabled him, like Socrates, to drink down all the boon companions, and return unconquered by the flow of "*Port og Punch og Braende-viin*." A few nights afterwards we joined a revel of a more pleasing kind, the lads and lasses of the village having been invited to a dance in the kitchen of the chief farm-house. A fiddle and a wooden black-jack of beer completed the simple preparations of the host, and the company were soon merrily engaged in their favourite Sultan Polka, and the Jenny Lind, which here they call the Hamburg Dance. We were much amused at the strangeness of the Halling dance, which was performed with great success by the most agile of the village lads. He marched round the floor with a solemn face to a soft fantastic tune, casting his eyes now and then upon a large nail which had been driven into the centre of the low wooden roof. Then at the right note, as he passed beneath the nail, he turned a sudden somersault, and struck it with his clouted boot, which brought down great applause at each successful repetition of the feat.

We cannot conclude a sketch of this district without saying a few words about the famous waterfall, which is approached by one of the dark ravines at the head of the lake before described. There are other falls of great height and beauty in the neighbouring gorge, and more than one full stream shoots over "the perpendicular escarpments of Simeidal;" there is also within a long day's journey the gigantic cataract of Skjeggedal above the Sorfjord which an accomplished traveller has very recently described; but the Vöring-foss remains the wonder of all that country-side. The road winds up to it for several miles between steep cliffs, and by the side of a foaming river, until it is blocked by another cliff, or rather pile of enormous rocks: a zigzag path leads up through ferns and dropping streams, and from the plain above we look down to the lake surrounded with snow-ribbed mountains through the black cleft by which we have ascended. On one side is a precipice over which two brothers, racing on snow-shoes, were dashed one winter into the valley: behind us a flat expanse of moor and marsh, covered with flowers and cloud-berries, divides us from the Jökul and its rocky companions. At some distance a column of white smoke rises from the ground, and this is the reek of the Vöring-foss; on approaching it and looking down we see a good-sized river falling into a deep chasm or cauldron with a mighty roar and vapour. All manner of fine descriptions have been written of it, and one traveller who was here in winter has left a striking account of its beauty when falling through a cave of ice, glittering with huge crystals and enormous icicles. A visitor of more pretentious style has been quoted by Lieutenant Breton:—"All nature stands aghast, the very mountains seem petrified at the sight, and the animals had fled from a wild which may almost be said to terrify the vegetable creation." We will not attempt to rival this magnificent rhapsody, and will only say that the most striking view is to be obtained from the overhanging cliff on the north side of the fall—which cannot, however, be reached without a wearisome journey through quaking

bogs and across muddy streams. The height of the fall has been much exaggerated. The books all agree in estimating the descent at least at 900 feet, and it is not unusual for travellers to maintain that the leap is a thousand feet high. Others have doubted the accuracy of the calculation made by its discoverer, Professor Haustein, and have observed that the visitor's position must cause the proportions of the waterfall to be foreshortened in a very unusual degree, if the common opinion is to be accepted. At the time of one of our visits a party of Norwegian engineers were employed upon a Government survey, and they decided the question for us by stating that the depth of the chasm was under 500 feet. There can, however, be no doubt, that the sheer fall of so large a body of water in long columns and wreaths of foam is one of the most magnificent sights in Europe. After gathering from the edge of the cliff overhanging the Foss a fine plant of the "King of the Mountains," which attains great perfection in this black and oozy soil, we followed the course of the river inland instead of returning to the shore a dozen miles below. As so few travellers go further inland than the waterfall itself, we will close this description of the Hardanger region with a few words about the upper country. The marshland lying between the mountain-tops here forms what is called a "fjeld-dale" or mountain-valley, closed at the end of a few miles by a sudden rise in the ground, and stretching again inland on a higher elevation, until step by step the limit of vegetation is reached, and nothing but stony peaks and muddy hills remain. We were well entertained at a little farm lying in the lower portion of the "fjeld-dale," and surrounded by meadows where "you scarce could see the earth for flowers," and where the wild strawberries and juicy cloud-berries grew all about in wonderful profusion. After coffee and trout, with bowls of fruit and cream, we were shown to the rooms hung with sweet herbs, and stored with heaps of peas, mallows, and other country treasures, where our beds of sweet hay had been prepared. On the loft outside lay a stack of what looked like pasteboard, but which was in truth the household store of "flad-brod" or thin griddle-cakes of oatmeal. We continued next day our course beside the river, through meadows as luxuriant as ever; the forget-me-nots spread in masses on every side, the slender ranunculi or "reindeer-flowers" choose the drier sides of the knolls and hillocks, "and the wild marsh-marigold flames like fire through swamps and hollows gray." Passing some fine cascades at Skurvestol, we entered a well-wooded plain, from which a green hill rises, surmounted by a little farm, the highest in situation of all upon this range of mountains. We turned away with regret from the wonderful view down the valley towards the sea, and round the mountains which encircle the moorland of yesterday's journey, where the broad river divides into two branches. We had to climb down the curved rocks, polished apparently by glacial action, and even the ponies got without a stumble down this formidable "Katzenstieg," the men holding on to their tails, and permitting them to move only inch by inch. Soon after this a cloud of spray was seen issuing from the

ground, and swaying to and fro in the wind. This was a waterfall named Storli-foss, of which we had never seen any description. It falls from a considerable height into a deep chasm, like the Vöring itself; by climbing down to a rock which jutted out in front of the fall, a very good view was attained by one of the party, but as he reascended the loose stones of the cliff-side began to move and carry him down, so that it was not without some trouble and anxiety that at last he was extricated from his dangerous imprisonment. Before evening we reached the higher fells, crossing snow at intervals; here all vegetation ceased, except the lichens, and a dwarfed willow that grows beside the snow. This region is inhabited only by the skulking grey foxes, the wild reindeer—of which, to our great pleasure, we passed a numerous herd—and by the golden plovers, which perch upon the scattered rocks and raise their wailing cry as the traveller passes along the moor. Turning downwards at last, we arrived at the broad pastures of Bjor-dal, where the last huts are built upon the verge of a desert tract which stretches away to the distant Halling-dal. The shallow river sparkled, and the distant snows were illumined in the crimson sunset, as we stood by the low doorway to see the cattle return to the sound of the Alpine horn; and here on the boundary of another province, and out of sight of the waters of the fjord, we shall close the account of our summer ramble in the pleasant regions of Hardanger.

Pettice Pisle.

CHAPTER I.

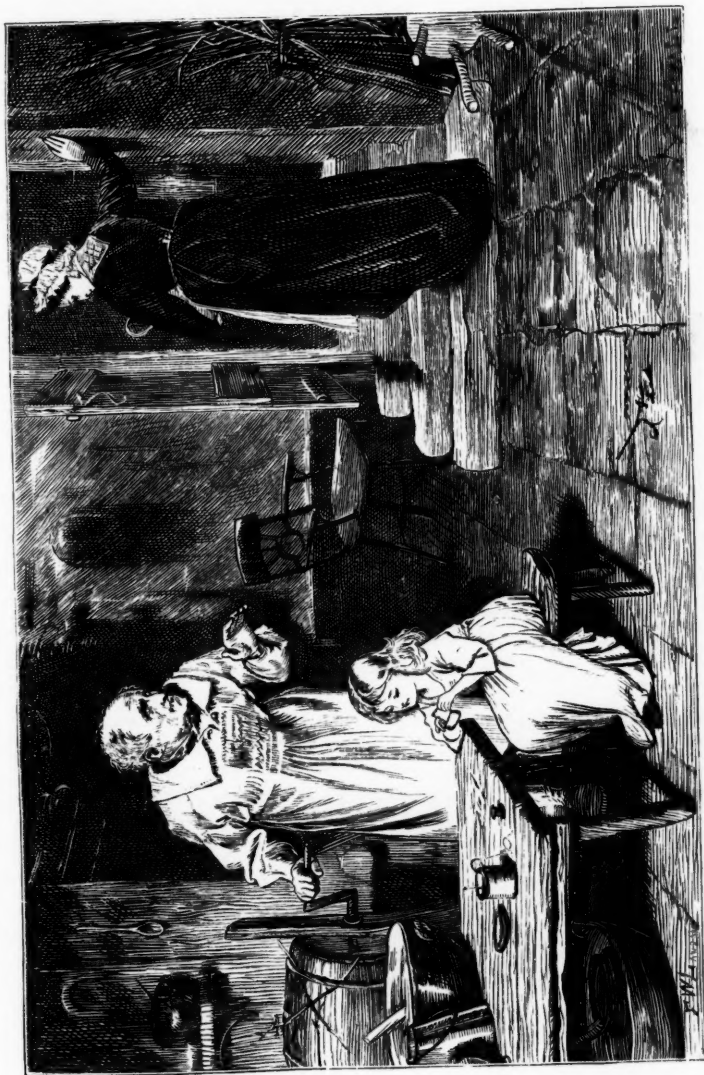
A YEOMAN'S ESTATE.



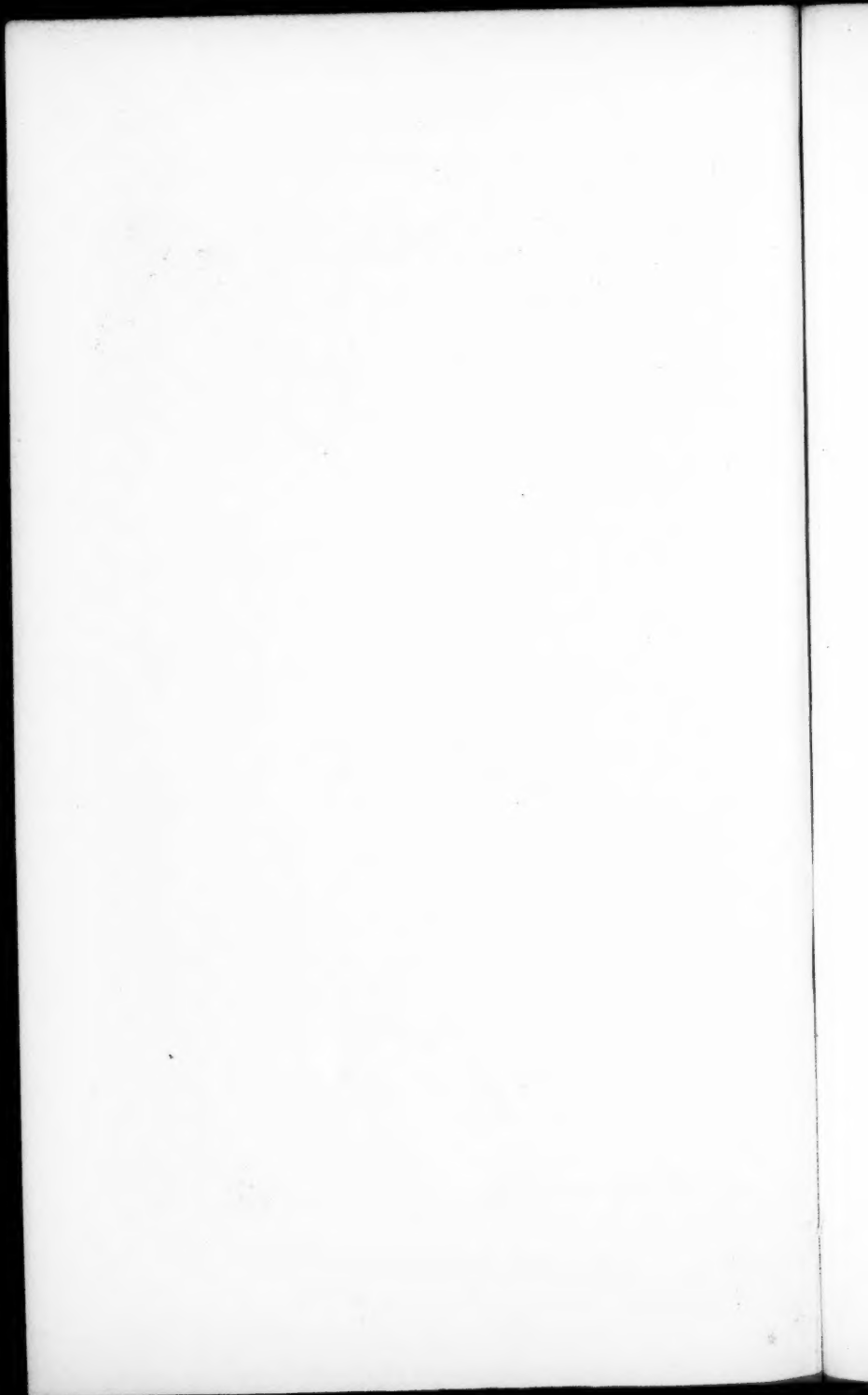
O they just go on locking the gates as usual! I can't think what they want to be so very private for," said a disagreeable-looking man, mounted on an exceedingly good horse, as he tried at a gate which led out of the deep hollow lane where he was riding into a neglected grass-grown road. He got down and tried to take it off its hinges, but it was secured at that end also. He uttered an oath, and then, seeming to know the place well, rode on to a field gate which opened on the lane further down, and came back across the pasture to his point.

It was a beautiful bit of ground, lying just where the land fell away in a gentle slope to the valley below; tossed about in every possible direction, with a clear pool at the bottom of the little dell in the heart of it, and with peeps at blue distance from all the higher points. But all was neglected and dilapidated: the fences, like overgrown thickets, were badly mended, the magnificent trees stood so thickly as to spoil each other, the gates, with the exception of the one into the lane, were all half broken, and there was a sad poverty-stricken look about everything. The horseman rode along the grassy unused road, across which lay the evening shadows, up to a sort of wide irregular avenue, the large branches of the tall elms arching in a great green space, which ended in a farmyard, woodyard, rickyard, all in one. Beyond this lay a curious old timbered house, its gables and many mullioned windows showing that it had once been a place of much greater pretension than as belonging to the poor yeoman its present possessor.

All was very still: the unseen flail in a barn close at hand, the cawing of the rooks in the trees above, and an occasional low from a distant cow



LETTIE SEWING UP THE AMULET.



coming home to be milked, were the only sounds to be heard, and there was no one to be seen about the house.

He called several times without receiving any answer. At last he caught sight of a little girl standing quietly in a sort of island of light, where the sunshine came through an opening in the high trees down upon her golden hair.

"Is nobody at home?" said the horseman impatiently.

"Granny's in the house," replied the child in a very low, shy voice. He fastened his horse to a broken paling, and walked up to the beautiful old wooden porch, with a curious pinnacle in the carved gable, hung with a neglected tangle of vine and jessamine, and with a stone seat on each side. As he came near, a tall, dark, stern-looking woman of about fifty, dressed in black, appeared at the open door. Her features had the remains of having once been very handsome, but now the sad dreary determination in her face was its striking part.

She motioned her visitor, without speaking, into the house: he was evidently no welcome guest. In a few minutes he came out again. "You'll tell Wynate what I say," he called out, as he mounted his horse and rode away in an opposite direction to that in which he had come.

The child had continued almost motionless in the place where she had first seen him, but when he disappeared she gave a sigh of relief; she did not know him, but her instinct was as strongly against him as that of a bird which covers away before a hawk.

She went on with her solitary play. A tall chestnut, a magnificent tower of bloom, stood at the end of the aisle of arching branches, leaving the blackness of the shadows under them still more striking. A shower of the blossoms had fallen after a little rain, and the child was stringing them upon a grass. She had hung herself over with long daisy chains, and the old shepherd smiled kindly at her as she passed.

"Thou'st made thyself rare and fine, my little maid," said he, affectionately.

Suddenly her grandmother's harsh voice was heard.

"Lettice, come in directly, child; it's time for you to be abed."

The little girl rose slowly, though obediently—bed has a gruesome sound on a May evening, flowers blooming, birds singing, cows lowing—it seems a terrible hardship to be shut up with eyes closed to all this beauty, while the sleep, which makes it endurable, if not pleasant, is not counted in a child's imagination.

As she reluctantly walked towards the house with her finger in her eye, a tall boy, about fifteen, with a merry look on his rosy brown face, came up behind her.

"Why, Lettice, what's the matter now, little one?" And he took her up in his arms as he spoke.

"Oh, uncle Edward," said she, flinging her arms round his neck in an ecstasy of hope, "mayn't I stay up for your supper; please mayn't I? It isn't seven o'clock yet. Oh, please," and she hugged him tightly.

"We'll see about it, little 'un; don't ye put yourself in such a way," answered he, carrying her straight into the sort of houseplace, half kitchen, half sitting-room, shut off from the entrance by a curious sort of black oak screen.

A grave, sad-looking man was standing by the latticed window at the further end, but he did not seem to see them come in. He was the true son of his mother—the same high forehead and deep-set eyes—but there had been a cross in the blood: the stern mouth and chin had not descended to him; there was a great deal of tenderness about the lines in his face, and what might be contemplation or the indecision produced, as sometimes happens, by the fear of giving pain.

"Mayn't Lettie stay up for supper to-night, Amyas?" said the boy, going up to his brother with the child still in his arms.

Amyas seemed to bring his thoughts up out of some far-off deep well, and even then required to have the question repeated before he took it in.

"She's much better abed," observed her grandmother, in a short tone.

"Nay, let the child stay with us this once, mother," replied Amyas, gently.

Mrs. Wynyate did not answer, and began in silence to make preparations for the meal.

"I should like some bread-and-milk to-night, mother," said the boy. And, without any observation or assistance from her, he went from the dairy to the pantry and back again to the kitchen fire, Lettie, in the full glory of "sitting up," following him like a little dog, carrying the plate, taking back the jug, and watching the boiling of the saucepan.

Two other brothers, strong sturdy fellows, strolled in. "Les quatre fils d'Aymon" were very unlike. These two seemed hardly above the level of labourers, and the few words which they uttered about their work, the way in which they cut their great slices of bread-and-cheese and cold fat bacon, and drank their deep draughts of thin cider, were of the same character—while Amyas had had a good deal of schooling as the eldest of the family, and so had Edward as the youngest.

"Could ye give me a dish o' tea, mother?" said Amyas, looking round rather drearily at the comfortless meal as he sat down to the long deal table.

"Tea's six shillings a pound," said Mrs. Wynyate, with a sort of short sigh, as she filled the teapot.

He drank his tea eagerly, but touched nothing else. It was a serious meal—it could hardly be otherwise with that stern woman seated at one end of the table, and that silent sad man at the other. But Lettie, sitting upon Edward's knee, was like the bit of sunshine in the avenue: she fed him with the bread-and-milk, and a low ripple of laughter went on between them at the landing of each "fish" out of the pool of milk into his mouth.

Mrs. Wynyate looked on with increasing disfavour.

"Sit up to the table, Ned, and don't crumb about," said she at last.

"They're not making a mess," said her uncle Amyas, gently, looking at her with the ghost of a smile. "Lettie's a tidy little lass,—neat, like her grandmother."

It was the second time that evening that he had interfered in her behalf, and she laid her soft little cheek against his arm as she sat next him in a passion of gratitude.

But execution came after the reprieve—the supper things were soon carried away and the child led off in earnest. She escaped from her stern grandmother's hands, however, once again and ran back.

"Good-night, uncle Amyas," said she, climbing up on his knee and putting her arms tenderly round his neck.

He kissed her very fondly, and set her silently down, and then justice had its course.

"Good-night, uncle Job, good-night, uncle John, good-night, Ted," she cried, as she was led off.

"You mustn't call your uncle, Ted," said Mrs. Wynyate, gravely.

Job and John kept hours with the cows and poultry; they were up with the sun, and thought no shame to go to bed with it. Edward had some boyish operation on a forked sort of root, which he was shaping with a knife, which took him a little longer, but even he soon disappeared, and Amyas and his mother were left alone.

"And he threatened they'd foreclose the mortgage?" said he, with a sort of dreary sigh. "Did he say how much time they'd allow to pay?"

Mrs. Wynyate was refooting a stocking by the miserable light of a "tallow dip."

"He said the interest hadn't been paid regular this dozen years; hardly ever in full, nor by yer father nor by you, and that yer couldn't expect any one to be kep' out of his money like that."

"And I'm sure I don't know where the money's to come from; with wheat down where 'tis, the farm didn't much more than pay the interest last year, and six mouths to feed off it."

"He said why didn't ye cut the trees, they was spiling one another and the land too, they were so thick."

"I meant to have done it this spring, but I couldn't find a good sale. We must cut 'em, but I hate touching the old timber," said Amyas, with a sort of groan. "I'll see and mark 'em now, however; but it's too late to fell the oak this spring," he added, with a kind of relief. And after sitting in silence for some time he, too, rose and went off to bed in the dark. Mrs. Wynyate's glimmering light, however, shone on hour after hour, as she sat and sewed, and mended, and darned, and patched, till far on into the night.

CHAPTER II.

AMYAS WYNYATE AND HIS HOME.

THE Woodhouse was a yeoman's estate. It had been in the family of the Wynyates for many generations, gradually becoming more and more impoverished, mortgaged as it was almost up to the value of the last acre ; which is the case, indeed, with most of these properties. In the old days the yeoman class seems to have been prosperous and useful, but, under the present state of things, they cannot apparently keep pace with the farmers of other men's land, who bring in fresh capital and fresh ideas and energy, and are everywhere in England gradually dying out,—a curious contrast (whether for good or evil) to the "morcellement" going on in France. Although when Mrs. Wynyate married she was supposed to have made rather a grand match, if it had not been for the honour of it, her husband might as well have been without a foot of land. He was a good-natured, weak, self-indulgent man, "nobody's enemy but his own : " virtue was not amiable under his wife's stern aspect, and he took refuge in something a little more jovial at the "Marquis of Granby" or the "Barley Mow." Disagreeable virtue has a good deal of harm to answer for of this kind in the world. Feckless and wasteful, the little chance there was of setting the property straight vanished under his hands, and one winter's night, after a drunken bout, he did not return. He was not discovered till morning, when he was found in a sort of quagmire : he had ridden round and round a field half through the night, for "there weren't ne'er a gate in it," he said. He never recovered the cold and exposure, rheumatic fever came on, and, at not quite fifty, he died, leaving a wife and six children, the youngest not six years old, to be provided for out of the land, weighed down as it was with debt. Amyas had lived almost entirely with his mother's brother, an old man with some money and a tanyard at the cathedral town near : a staunch Dissenter, in the days when dissent entailed an amount of petty persecution and annoyance which we have nearly forgotten. It was very real suffering for righteousness' sake, but sometimes, as in Amos King, it induced a certain manner of conscious virtue, of superior sanctity, which was trying to the nerves of weaker vessels. He had set his heart upon Amyas becoming a "minister : " he was a readin' lad, "a pious youth," and would be "a shining light" in the communion. As time went on, however, his nephew's tender heart and rather fastidious taste revolted against certain parts of the creed and discipline ; he was sticking at the doctrine of "reprobation," to his uncle's infinite distress, who was indeed as much horrified at the young man's daring to dissent from him, as the stoutest old canon in the close at his own nonconformity, and he complained in much the same sense, if not terms, at the "carnal self-sufficiency," the "wicked wilful blindness" which alone could produce such results. The right of private judgment was by no means an article of the Protestant faith (fifty years ago).

Poor Amyas was in a most painful state of perplexity and distress, when the knot was cut for him, by being suddenly summoned home on his father's death. There was no will or provision for the widow or her younger children, the property all came to him, and he found himself at three-and-twenty the head of the house, with the maintenance of a large family on his hands and little but debt to support them on. He knew more of theology than of farming, but he did his best, poor fellow: he never married, for how could a second family be maintained? He had toiled day and night to keep things together and to pay the interest, and now, after nine years, it seemed to him as if he had been "pouring water into baskets."

His mother was one of those stern, strong-willed women who go through life constantly worsted. She had never had the smallest influence with her husband or her only daughter, a beautiful self-willed girl, on whom she doated, perhaps the more for their not having a single quality in common. There is a slow power in fools, a strength in the weak, with which it is hopeless to contend. What impression can be made on water, which returns to its level again after the most convincing pressure?

A year after her father's death, when she was about eighteen, Letitia Wynyate had fallen in love with a man whom she had met at the neighbouring miller's, of whom her mother, with reason, thought very ill. After some furious scenes between the two, Letitia, who had never been crossed by either parent, went off to her friend's house, and was married from thence against her mother's most positive commands. Mrs. Wynyate never forgave it. Letitia made a sort of "offer" at friendship about two years after, but her mother's resentment was too deep: they once met, but it was coldly and stiffly. At the end of five years, however, peace was made in another way: Letitia died, leaving one child, whom she entreated her mother to take charge of, "or the poor thing would have nobody to look after her!" The implied slur on her husband mollified Mrs. Wynyate almost as much as the death itself, while the dreary feeling that she should never see her child again, and the thought of those long years of enforced silence, aged her ten years and more. But it did not soften her towards her granddaughter, she bore her a grudge, as if it had been the child's fault. She was very unlike her mother, and therefore Mrs. Wynyate determined that she reminded her of her father, and she "did her duty" to Lettie, which is of all things the most aggravating.

As the only representative of woman, however, in the house (no one could insult Mrs. Wynyate by considering her as belonging to the gentler sex), her four uncles, each in his own way, loved her and spoiled her, as is fit and proper for a little girl. Hers was a solitary little life in one sense; there were no children near to be had, but her playmates included the whole animal and vegetable creation within the domain of the Wynyates. As she sat on the ground next morning, with her great hunch of bread in one hand, and the tin porringer, which uncle Job had filled with

new milk as he passed with his pail into the dairy, the chickens flocked round her on the tenderest and most equal terms; the wheeling pigeons swooped within a foot of her head; the calves, the dogs, the horses, all seemed to treat her as a pet thing belonging to themselves. There was nothing about the place which disputed her supremacy but her grandmother and the old peacock, the most tyrannical and shrewish of his race, who led his hens a perfect life of it, and insulted Lettie whenever he met her.

She had finished her breakfast and was now standing, trying to hold out an olive-branch to this, after all, the least formidable of her enemies.

"Piccocks, piccocks, come and eat!" said she, when her Uncle Job, on his road once more between the dairy and the cows, came up as the fierce bird made a snatch at her, and drove him away.

"Thee must na' ha' nought to do with that surly beast, do'st thou hearken me, Lettie?"

"I want for to make friends wi' him," said the child, trembling all over.

"There's some folk, the more you calls 'um the more they won't come," said Job, sententiously; "and now ye go to Dannel, as is tumbling the butter in the milk-house," added he, as he went about his work.

The child went on willingly to the dairy. Daniel was an old blind man who did the churning under Amyas' benevolent rule, and was her best playfellow when Edward was at school.

He was standing in deep thought with the handle in his hand.

"Well, 'tis queer," said the old man, "how the butter won't come nohow some days! I b'lieve 'tis bewitched. Lettie, you get me two twigs of the rowan bush: we'll make a cross and stop *that*, anyways."

"How is it the witches does it?" inquired the child when she had brought the desired charm.

"Well, I can't say. My old woman she had a sovereign cuddled away in a drawer, and it's gone and no one's been nigh the house; but she did see a hare a runnin' off that evenin', close to the skillen, and p'raps that were she—the witches turn themselves into hares, they do, by-times, like Mall Do,* yer know, and my missis she flung a pobblestone at her, and p'raps that's the reason I'm so bad. I hets and burns and smerts all night, and my head he noises so that I be quite froghtened."

"P'raps you've a got the ague faver," said Mrs. Wynyate, looking in from the top of the stone steps to see how the butter was getting on.

"No, I've got no faver," answered the old man, doggedly. "I've got that as won't let it be faver," he whispered to Lettie as her grandmother retired.

* This remarkable zoological fact is chronicled on Mall Do's tombstone at Beaulieu.

"What is it, Dannel?" replied the child, in a low voice.

"Nay, thou beesn't old enow to understand," said the old man, importantly. "I got he from the wise woman." He had miscalculated Mrs. Wynyate's distance, however; she had only retired as far as the passage closet.

"Show it me, Dannel," said she imperiously, from her vantage ground.

"It ayn't lucky for to look at he," replied the old man, peevishly; but she insisted, and at last, with a deep sigh, he pulled out a dirty little bag which she cruelly ripped open; it contained the charm on a bit of parchment.

"When Jesus Christ went to be crucifie
He said I have both ague and faver,
If ye shall kip my commandments
Yer neiver shall have nayther"—

ran the rude rhyme.

"*That'll* do ye no good," said Mrs. Wynyate, dictatorially; she had no faith in any nostrums but her own. "I'll giv ye some boiled snails or some Good Friday bread."

"Madam allays has her own way, she's so stomachy* and high-minded," he said sadly to the child, who was doing her best to sew up the amulet again for him as before. "It'll have spoiled the vertue on it; but I shan't take the snails. She rubs me the wrong way o' the stuff like a cat, and it sets a body's back up, it do."

Mrs. Wynyate, busy as she was, took great pains in making the horrid decoction, but it was with the utmost satisfaction that he declared to Lettie, "Twere an ugly handsel, and I just hulled it a' into the pig-wash."

That evening Ned came up to Lettie with the knobbed root, at the end of which, with his ever active knife, he had been shaping a kind of rude head.

"Here's a nice baby for you, Lettie," said he.

A child's imagination is so rich, so active, that it rather prefers a formless foundation on which it can build at its pleasure. It is not the grand pink and white lady in gorgeous clothing and a string to open and shut its eyes, but the battered, wretched thing without arms or legs, who is pressed passionately to its tender mother's breast, and only taken away at bed-time with tears. It seems to be the same with all uncultivated minds. "The wonder-working images are not the *chef-d'œuvres* of Raphael, but the blackened pictures, the formless stones," says a great man. Diana of Ephesus, "the image fallen from heaven," was probably nothing but a lump of ironstone. Therefore when Ned wrapped the root in a red pocket-handkerchief of his own, and tied it with a string round what was by courtesy called its waist, Lettie, in a rapture of delight, took it at once to her heart, and it became to her a "baby," and the most valuable confidant of all her griefs and joys. Most things were wrong in Mrs. Wynyate's

* "Whoso hath a prond look and high stomach."—Psalm 101.

code. She was a very conscientious woman, but her creed and her disposition reacted on each other; her sorrows and her methodism combined to throw a dark veil over the world, in which all amusements were tabooed, and even "of laughter she said in her heart, it is mad." Lettie was too young to understand all this, but a sort of instinct made her keep her precious baby out of her grandmother's sight, and it was some time before the criminal was discovered. At last, however, one day off her guard, she came into the kitchen hugging and nursing her prize, and singing lovingly to it.

"What's that horrid bundle?" said her grandmother, angrily. "I don't choose to have dolls in the house, don't you know that, Lettice? I shall burn the nasty thing." And she turned towards the fire, only stopping to save the handkerchief, and delayed by untying the curious knots in which it was tied before she carried out the sacrifice.

It is strange how entirely grown people forget the intense misery which children are capable of enduring; because of its short duration, that something else soon takes its place, men, and women too, laugh and talk of childish sorrows as "being nothing." They are as real as they are poignant, and a great deal more absolute than the pain which their elders endure: a child's horizon is so limited that it sees no issue to its woes, no hope, no remedy, no future—its sorrow as its joy absorbs its whole little being. When Lettie saw her beloved "baby" about to be cast into the flames, her horror was as great as that of the mother depicted in the "Judgment of Solomon," which hung upon the wall in very gorgeous pink and yellow colouring. She stood in a sort of tearless agony, with her hands clasped.

"Nay, mother," said Ted, with a smile, taking hold of her arm, "what harm can it do? Let the little mayd have her dollie!"

"I tell ye, I won't have her spoilt i' that fashion; it's dress and fine clothes and all them things that ruins the girls," said Mrs. Wynyate, vehemently, 'which was not quite in point, considering the attire and appearance of the monster.

"Mightn't she be buried?" said Lettice, in a low voice, as she watched the fate of her child trembling in the balance; "not burned, it wouldn't hurt her so much!"

At that moment Amyas came in at the kitchen door. "Why, what's the matter?" said he, struck by the exceedingly tragic appearance of the company.

"Mother wants to burn Lettie's dollie as I made for her. What hurt can it do for her to have one?" said Edward, sulkily, while Lettie ran up and embraced her uncle's leg as a deliverer of virtue in distress.

Amyas took the child up in his arms, pale with agitation. "Why, 'twould be like burning my little Lettie for me," said he, smiling. "I think Granny will spare it if we ask her," he added, turning kindly to his mother.

Lettie held out her arms for her rescued infant on this Solomon deci-

sion, and silently embraced her uncle and the hideous image with an equal passion of affection.

Mrs. Wynyate turned away without a word; her son had his own way by might of extreme gentleness and tenderness, and she rarely resisted his quiet fiats.

That night, after every one was in bed but himself, Amyas came in from looking after a sick horse; it was very late, and the moonlight streamed into the house through the two great unshuttered mullioned windows, and threw broad paths of light across the pavement.

As he closed the door behind him he saw the child in her little white night-dress, her small bare feet gleaming on the stones, passing like a spirit noiselessly across the hall.

"Lettie," said he, lifting her up and taking her cold hands in his, "what are you doing, my little 'un, running about at this time o' night?"

"I was looking to see whether Mary was safe," she said, shyly.

"Who's Mary?" answered her uncle.

"Dollie, I mean," she said, with a blush. A child is very reticent in general about what she most cares for. "I put her in a box in the parlour, and I wanted to be sure she was quite safe," she repeated, with a little nervous trembling all over her.

"This'll never do," muttered Amyas to himself; "she'll be down in a nervous fever next. Do you trust me, Lettie?" he said, turning her little face towards him in the moonlight.

The child's expression was the very ideal of faith.

"Then look, dear, I promise you that no harm shall happen to Mary; and now, little mayds make themselves ill if they run about o' this fashion in the night, and Lettie must promise when she goes to bed to lie still and sleep."

"I promise," said Lettie, religiously.

He carried her upstairs and put the little cold atom into his mother's bed.

"What's the matter?" said Mrs. Wynyate, rather crossly as she awoke, but Amyas was gone, only saying,—*"I'll tell ye to-morrow; don't talk to her to-night, mother,"* as he left the room.

He never discussed, and the next morning all the explanation which she received was—

"We won't say any more about the child's pastime; just leave it, mother; I've promised that it shall take no hurt."

Amyas was a curious compound of strength and weakness. "You're so inconsistent," his mother often complained, which is pleasanter than saying we don't understand a character.

In Amyas the power of reflection overbalanced the powers of action. He saw so many sides to a question that it often made him seem irresolute, or he suffered so much from seeing pain inflicted by some act of his own (far more, indeed, than the patient,) that he undid decisions which it

had cost him much pain to arrive at. Somehow, in business matters, "il n'avait pas la main heureuse:" if he bought a cow she turned out a bad milker, his sheep had the foot-rot, his horses came to more grief than other men's—the "luck" always seemed against him, the tide turned while he was considering how to use it. His perceptions were very keen for all that concerned his affections: it did not answer to say or do anything before him under the idea that so apparently absent a man would not notice it; he saw and heard, by fits and starts it is true, but sometimes very inconveniently—having never, however, seen his estate in any other condition, going nowhere so as to compare it with others; and without sixpence to spend upon it, the luxuriant fences and the weedy fields, the tumbling barns and the unattended roads went on unchanged from year to year, though he was up early and down late, while the toiling and the mowing seemed to bear no fruit but in the furrowing of his own cheeks and the premature whitening of his own head.

CHAPTER III.

FISHING IN THE HERON'S POOL.

THERE was a good deal of wood cut the next spring, and the sound of the axes resounded through the fields and woods. Amyas went daily round among the woodcutters, secretly lamenting over each tree as it fell, with a feeling as if it had been a living thing. Lettie accompanied him whenever she could get away, insisting conscientiously on climbing each fallen trunk, and being jumped down at the highest end. Her uncle submitted with unwearied patience; indeed if he had not been so patient it would have been better for the farm. Every labourer on the estate knew that it was impossible to put the "Master" out; if a man was so old and infirm that no one else would employ him, that was a reason why Amyas kept him on; if a boy was too young to be of much use to the neighbouring farmers, and wanted work, Amyas found a place for him. It would have taken a large fortune to pursue farming on such principles.

The two went on their devious way: Amyas with his hands clasped behind him and his meditative look; Lettie springing about like a parched pea, scrambling up a hedge for a flower, poking into the bushes after a nest, and coming up to explain her prizes in words which tumbled over each other from their eager interest. He saw more than she did, in spite of those bright little eyes of hers.

"That's a night-jar a-making that noise. Look at those ants marching like a regiment of soldiers?"

Her grandmother generally, however, insisted on some abominable bit of hemming, some grievous button-holes, just at the critical moment. She did not approve of the saturnalia of enjoyment consequent on going out with uncle Amyas.

"Why, that handkercher's grimed with dirt, Lettice, it's been so long about! I suppose you'll have finished that bit o' knitting by the time you're forty. Little girls should take to their needle, Amyas; I won't have ye muddle away the child's time with such nonsense. What's night-jars to her? and she gets in such a mess. You'll learn her no end o' untidy ways."

"Why, ye keep her always as neat as a new pin, mother," said Amyas smiling. "There's no fears of slatterns in your house."

Mrs. Wynyate was a very conscientious woman: she would have cut off her hand and cast it into the fire for what she believed to be right; but then she would have done it also by any of her children, which is not exactly the same thing—inflicting martyrdom is not quite so meritorious as enduring it as some people seem to think. She was at work from morning till night, never sparing herself in any toil or trouble; it was wonderful how one pair of hands got through so much. She laboured like the virtuous woman in Proverbs, and refused herself every indulgence and every pastime; but she had been brought up in the most rigid Methodist creed: she had an unfortunate temper, and it was aggravated instead of mended by her conviction that it was her duty to be stern. Discipline was much more thought of fifty years ago,—“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it out for him,” as she put it, and the rod was therefore in constant requisition.

The Sabbath-day had always been a day of grief and wailing and gnashing of teeth to her children under her grim creed; but her sons had now pretty nearly grown beyond her power; she had almost come, indeed, to regard man as a stiff-necked creature from whom no result could be expected, but Lettice was a little girl whom it was her duty to mould, and it would be her fault if this small vessel of wrath was not rescued from reprobation. Sad was the sobbing, the putting in closets, the whipping over the stiff Methodist catechism, each point of doctrine proved by a string of texts, the chapter and verse given to each, and all to be learnt accurately; for Lettice, quick enough at her hymns, and who liked her chapter and her psalm, never could accomplish her “answers.” Any concrete image may be seized by a child—it is very open to the beauty of melody and rhythm, but an abstract metaphysical proposition is to it a mere string of unintelligible words which might as well be in Greek, and terrible were these engines of oppression for children (fifty years ago).

“She can learn fast enough when she likes it,” said her grandmother, in answer to Amyas’s doubtful remonstrances. “I heerd her singing no end o’ silly nonsense Ned had teachd her only the t’other day,” which was true enough, *i. e.* she could recollect when there was anything for her memory to take hold of; but this was beyond Mrs. Wynyate’s comprehension, who honestly considered the child very naughty, and punished her accordingly. One Sunday evening, her task still undone, the tearful Lettie took refuge with her book by her uncle, who was sitting meditatively in the

orchard ; but she was not attending, as she ought to have been doing, to "The other benefits that we receive with justification are adoption and regeneration,"—the milk for babes "of seven years and upwards," which she had to learn. As she sat on her three-legged "cricket" by Amyas's side her quick little eyes caught sight at one moment of a duck, followed by her brood, going down to the pond ; at another the cooing of the pigeons in the high trees above their heads made her look up.

"Isn't it very wicked of the birds, Uncle Amyas, doing same as they does upon week days, like that?" said she at last, feeling that her case was hard, and that if they were allowed to play she ought, at least, to have the comforts of self-righteousness, and pride of looking down on their evil ways.

Amyas was so modest a man that he always doubted his own judgment when opposed to others, and he had a beautiful respect for his mother, whom he really loved in spite of her sternness : moreover, he was too uncertain in his doubts as to the truth of her doctrines to formalise his opposition even to himself, and he was puzzled.

"Well, Lettie," he said at last, "thee see'st God made 'um so, and, I suppose, He knew 'twas best. They can't sit still and read (not the birds), and p'r'aps He thinks they're praising him in their own way o' that fashion all the days of their lives, not only on the Sabbath-day ; and that's best of all, thou knowest, Paul says."

Luckily, Lettie was not logical, or she might have asked, like a celebrated prelate of late, whether something of the same kind might not be said in behalf of the children. Some of the most cruel things in the world have been done by the most excellent people, mistakes, want of imagination, ignorance, inflict almost as much suffering as wickedness. The early inquisitors were most conscientious, benevolent men, only anxious for the souls of their victims ; Luther directed that a child possessed by the devil should be drowned ; Sir Mathew Hale burnt a witch, all upon the highest principles : and Mrs. Wynyate made Lettie's life miserable from the sincerest desire to do right by the little girl's soul. Still, when we undertake the part of Providence to a child, it is perhaps well to make quite sure we have done our best to enlighten ourselves as to what is and what is not desirable.

"Uncle Amos is dead sudden, and they send word to bid me to the funeral, mother," said Amyas a day or two after.

"Dear heart, but 'tis a dreadful sudden take off ; I trust he had assurance of his soul. I know he was ever one of the elect from his youth up," replied Mrs. Wynyate.

Fifteen miles in those days was such a gulf that they rarely had any intercourse with Amos King, who, besides, had given his nephew to understand that he considered him as little better than a castaway, one who had put his hand to the plough and taken it away again. In spite of this estrangement, however, it was a sad expedition to Amyas's affectionate nature : he felt as if he ought not to have left the old man so long

without a sign, and it was with a sore heart that he prepared to ride over one evening, to return the next day after the ceremony.

Mrs. Wynyate was doubly busy in his absence, and Lettie had a sort of holiday. At the bottom of the orchard was a wild tangle of hawthorn and holly, a secluded place where the child used to take refuge when she was afraid of being seen in the farmyard. Ned, too, when he was at home from school, had his own operations there: he was a born sportsman, and every hedgerow at the Woodhouse being a miniature copse, there was a good deal of game about, none of which came amiss to him: rabbits, weasels, pike and eel fishing, rat-hunts in the big barn, "nestes" of wild-fowl, on which Lettie reported progress with the utmost zeal.

It was the last day of his holidays, and a beautiful afternoon, when he came out to look for her, his mouth full of lines, both hands occupied with bait, and a landing-net over his shoulder. She was a pleasant little companion, and though he felt it to be a condescension on his part, he liked to have her with him.

There were some tall white lilies in the neglected bit of garden at the upper end of the orchard; they grew among the thorns and thistles and great dock-leaves, and looked almost more striking in their desolate beauty than set in trim borders. Lettie was sitting before them with her doll in her arms, talking and answering herself eagerly, quite unconscious that any one was near. A whole story seemed to be enacting:

"And the white ladies they say to me and baby, 'Little girl, take her up tight in your arms, and we'll go and dance with the king and the queen, and we fly up in the air so high over the tops of the trees' . . ."

"What are you doing, Lettie?" said the boy coming up, laughing, behind her. "Who are you talking to? who are the white ladies? Why, it sounds as if there were a dozen of ye!"

The little girl blushed deeply. Children have a curious horror of being laughed at.

"Who are the white ladies?" he repeated.

She pointed to the lilies; she did not like even so far to destroy the illusion as to name them.

"And what were they telling ye about the dance with the king and the queen?"

"You shouldn't laugh so, uncle Ned," said she, indignantly, driven to bay; "you tell yourself tales at school; there's that one about the gentleman as went away in a ship and found the great bird and the diamonds, and the old man that sat upon his shoulders. What are diamonds, uncle Ned?"

"No, we tell ourselves no tales except sometimes at dinner-time, and then we don't waste our time with rubbish stories about white ladies," said her uncle, in a grand and moral mood. "Now come down to the Heron's Pool: we'll set some night-lines," he added, making peace with this to him the most delightful occupation in the world.

It was a charming spot ; the branches of the great oaks still left swept down close to the little gravelly shore ; a heron stood contemplating life and the chance of a gudgeon on one leg at the upper end on a small spit of sand, and a dabchick was diving on the other side.

" May I go and paddle, uncle Ted ? " said Lettie, who was under strict orders never to go near the water by her little self, and for whom it therefore had a special attraction.

He was much too busy to reply, but he nodded his head ; and Lettie, to her infinite delight, unreprieved, pulled off her shoes and stockings and walked slowly into the tiny stream which ran out at one end of the pool, and as she grew bolder into the lake itself. Presently, although she thought she was very careful, the tail of her frock dipped into the water behind, and she wrung it dry with much trouble : then the little white feet slipped upon a stone and the front fell into the mud, and the more she rubbed the worse the stains appeared ; her grandmother's coming wrath grew terrible in her mind—the " you bad child " which was perpetually heard ; but as she knew all sins were alike in the eyes of a certain Draconian impartial justice, she now became reckless in her crimes, for the frock was past all hope of concealment. At last she spied a coot's nest, and creeping under the boughs she crawled along a half-dead willow-trunk which stuck far out into the water, and was just stretching out her hand to take out one of the eggs, when, to her horror, she saw her grandmother, who hardly ever left the immediate precincts of the house, coming along the road. She had been to look after a " cade lamb " in Amyas's absence ; she now saw her own suspended in the air, and called out in a wrathful voice,—

" Lettie, what are you doing there ? Come back directly ! "

The child turned in terror, lost her hold on the slippery green moss, and tumbled into the deep water with a cry. Edward, who was close at hand, sprang up at the sound, and had plunged in and brought her to land almost before she sank. As he carried her home, dripping like himself from head to foot, Mrs. Wynyate, excessively angry with them both, followed behind, reproaching him with such effect, that whereas at first he had been both pained and penitent for what had happened, by the time they reached the house he was in as furious a state as his mother.

" Danger ! not a bit of it : the water wasn't up to my waist," he repeated. He was in an amphibious state of discipline between home and school, which made her cling the more to her waning authority. As for Lettie, she had torn and dirtied her frock and narrowly escaped drowning, two almost equally unpardonable offences in her grandmother's eyes. Even Amyas could not have saved her this time had he reached home ; she was whipped and put to bed, after which operation Mrs. Wynyate followed Ned, who had gone up to his own garret to change his wet clothes, and stood fiercely scolding over him all the time. He answered in her own tone, and she suddenly locked the door and left him supperless for the evening.

A little time afterwards, Amyas, coming in sadly from his uncle's funeral, found Lettie sobbing in an agony of fright and repentance upstairs, while Ned, who had climbed out of the window of his garret prison, and let himself down by the old pear-tree against the wall, at the risk of his neck, was marching up and down the room with her, fuming at the injustice and absurdity of his mother's punishments.

"As if I couldn't get out of that room easy enough! and as for Lettie, she'd never have fallen in a bit if it hadn't been for mother calling of her in a voice as would have frightened the dead! She blared at the little mayd like a polecat. I was close by—there wasn't no danger—where was the harm? She were with me fishing; where could she be better, I'd like to know? And who's a right to fish (you letting of me) sooner nor me, I wonder?" cried Ned, passionately.

Injustice has generally a different effect on boys and girls: a little girl's conscience is much more active; the sense of justice is much stronger in a boy. Lettie was overwhelmed with grief at her own wickedness in being nearly drowned, Ned was furious at the idea of punishing a misfortune, brought on, as he believed, by the judge herself.

"It's mother as ought to be beat! I'll tell ye what, Amyas, I won't stand it any longer; I've been thinking of it this age, I'll go out somewhere, into a trade or summat. I'll not stay any more, and be sat upon by my mother rampaging about like anything: I'm a man now, I'm a'most sixteen!"

Lettie's tears fell faster at these terrible threats. Amyas was silent.

"We'll talk of it all to-morrow, Ned," he said at last, quietly. "If you're a man you should behave as one, and not speak as you did to mother but now. You'd best perhaps go to bed now; I'll fetch the key and your supper up here. Quiet the little one a bit," he whispered kindly, as he went out; "see, she's like to go into a fit she's so flustered, and be thankful, my boy: we should have been bad off if aught had befallen her." Ned's under lip had begun to quiver, and it was evident that if it had not been for his manhood the hardened sinner would, by this time, have burst out crying.

Amyas found his mother sternly preparing supper, with a pretence to herself that all was right upstairs, and that her conduct had been most judicious.

"And now ye tell me about yer uncle," said she as he took the basin of bread-and-milk which she offered him and turned to carry it upstairs. "I warn yer, Amyas, it's just flying in the face of Providence" (whatever that curious process may be), "for you to give them children their own way i' that fashion."

"Dear mother," he answered quietly, as he went out, "they're not having their own way: Ned is going to bed with a sore heart, and the little 'un's frightened half out o' her wits; they'll not do it again anyhow."

The two culprits fed together in silence, Lettice hardly touching the food, and the boy went off to bed.

"And now, my little 'un, what's that pretty hymn-carol you says? 'It was not down to housen gay, that Christ a child came for to stay,'" said Amyas, looking at the small, flushed, tear-stained face.

The child knelt up, looking like an infant Samuel, laid her head tenderly against him, and repeated the half-charm, half-prayer.

"And now my little Lettie's going to sleep, God bless her, and all will be right to-morrow!" And under the shadow of his wing she lay down to rest.

"Uncle Amyas, are you there?" she started up once or twice to say; but he was still standing at the window, waiting patiently till she was asleep, and looking out at the deepening twilight. He had had a trying day, and would have been glad of a quiet evening; and here on his return he found that in the course of her one day's driving, his mother had contrived to upset the coach: a painful proof, which he could have dispensed with, that he was master in his own household. And then his thoughts went back to the scene at his uncle's funeral: when the will was opened after their return from the churchyard, it was found, to his astonishment, that the old man, who had quarrelled with his daughter and her husband, had left Amyas all his property. He had immediately taken steps to transfer the whole to his unlucky cousin, who scarcely thanked him, but observed coldly that "so far as she could see he had only done his duty like as everybody ought to do." And Amyas was quite of the same mind, and thought also that such a self-evident thing as one's duty was the only one possible, and required no thanks.

It was not the property that now was in his mind: he was thinking regretfully, that he should never see the old man again. "And I could have asked him help find a place for Ned," said he to himself. He was not so alarmed about the wickedness of the world as his mother, but the boy was full young to be sent out to fare for himself, and he began to inquire whether he were not himself to blame in the management of the lad: it somehow never seemed to occur to him to find fault with anybody but himself. A very tender conscience becomes occasionally an unconscionable tyrant.

"And you haven't telled me anything yet about Amos!" said his mother, when he came downstairs. "And how did he die? and how were it with his soul, taken off so sudden? And about his will, what have he a done with all that nice little bit o' property as he owned?" she went on, somewhat glad to escape out of the "ignorant present" of the concerns about her.

And Amyas told her everything excepting the important part of his day's work, and the change he had made in the will. What was the use of discussing the matter?

"I did think as he'd a left you or me summat out o' all that money," said Mrs. Wynyate, somewhat discontentedly, "and his daughter marrying to disoblige her family."

"Surely, mother, it's his own child a man should leave his fortune to, if he's got one," replied Amyas, quietly, as he went off to bed. "And Susan have a sent you the old cuckoo-clock as were your father's, you know, as a keepsake."

"Well, and I shall be glad for to see its old face again, and hear the chime. I mind that cuckoo singing that way ever sin I were a child—eh, what a many years ago!" said Mrs. Wynyate, with unwonted feeling. And Amyas did not mention that when he had asked for this little waif out of the property which he had given up, as a recollection for his mother, Mrs. Susan had demurred at parting with it, and had only finally yielded because, as she said, "after all, we've a got a better one at home, and it loses so as I don't know as we've any use for it in the kitchen here." Amyas was a perfect non-conductor for all cross words or unkind actions: they all died a natural death and were buried when they reached him.

The next morning Ned was firm in his fancy to leave home, and Amyas could not but agree, though it went to his heart to part with the boy. He could not afford to keep him longer at school, and there was no room for him in the Wynyate household, where the feud between him and his mother was always smouldering. She expected the submission of a child from the great lad, where her efforts of strong-willed, impotent authority were always made without the hope that the master of the house would stand by her in her unreasonable claims. She had attempted the same with her husband about the public-house, and with her daughter about her acquaintance and her marriage, never considering the use of laying down positive commands which she had no power to enforce. As with many other people, there was a confusion in her thoughts between her own will and the will of heaven: she had an unfortunate temper, and she often could not distinguish between its decrees and those of Providence; her own opinion and abstract right were honestly the same in her eyes, and there is evidently positive impiety in viewing a thing or acting differently from abstract right.

"So young Ned's a-goin' to leave us! I thowt as it weren't for nowt as I heerd the old ash-tree a-groanin' by our door last night," said the old blind man next day, when the great event was announced to him. "I bean't sure as it isn't quite right; he's the littlest on 'um, but he's ever been the most rumbustical: and when childer takes to their ranties, seems as if we'd no call for to kip 'um at home any more. So dunnot ye cry, my little mayd, he'll do well enough. If they can't be comf'able in their nestes at home, my old woman used allays for to zay zays she, 'Why, let 'um goo; they must jist fight along like as we did afore 'um.' 'Tis like the birds: when they're big enough they just flies away from the old 'uns, and it's a chance they never sees 'um again, or else how ever could there be folk enough out in the wide world for to make all things goo?"

"But what shall I do without him, Dannel?" said the tender-hearted Lettie, not at all consoled by this philosophic view of the demands of

humanity upon man. She looked very pale and shaken with the performances of the day before.

"He'll come back fast enough, child: an he's ailing or sorrowful, the old place will look fair in his eyes when he's a long way off, and 'twill have long strings to his heart for to pull it back. Don't ye be afraid, poor dear heart, he'll rub along."

CHAPTER IV.

LETTIE'S SCHOOLMASTERS.

AMYAS had so few ties with the outer world that it was with great difficulty a small place as clerk, without any salary, was at length found for Edward at a little seaport town some twenty miles away.

The boy's courage rather failed when he found himself committed to leaving home, but his dignity held him up, and when the time at last arrived, he went off apparently undismayed and of good courage. Amyas was, indeed, the most distressed of the two, which gave the lad a reason for heroism and a feeling of dignity as the strong man of the family.

"Don't cry!" said he, majestically, to Lettice, who hung round him, drowned in tears, as if he had been going to the antipodes. "I dare say you'll all do pretty well in a short time, little 'un, without me. You'll get over it, Lettie, in a while," he repeated; "and mind yer don't forget the terrier pups: they're to be ready afore I come home again for rabbiting, you'll recollect?" And as he drove off in the taxed-cart to join the coach, he called out once more to his sorrowing relatives, "You'll not forget the pups!"

The boy, indeed, would have been shocked to see how well everything went on at the Woodhouse after his important departure. Lettice's tender little heart never quite forgot him, and in her solitary plays "uncle Edward" always enacted the part in her mind of all the heroes, and good knights and genii; else all was as before. Her chief playfellow now was the old blind man.

One bright beautiful day that autumn there was high feast and festival going on in the great old orchard behind the house, for the cider-press had come up, and everybody about the farm had come in to help. The apple-trees, large and spreading, covered with the weird grey moss which clothes the branches in that soft damp climate with a sort of hoary hair, were hung with red and golden fruit and looked very idyllic. It was a prolific year, and the boughs were so laden that they would have broken under the weight of apples if they had not been propped up. Great baskets stood about in all directions to receive them; and a good deal of rude jollity was going on in this English vintage. The men were perched in the higher branches, and the women stood below catching the fruit, collecting it on the ground, picking out the decayed apples, and emptying the

others into the insatiable maw of the rude cider-press, which turned with a harsh creaking, grating noise, pressing 'out the juice into pails on one side, while the most imperfectly crushed apples were carried off on the other for the pigs.

"It's pretty late : you go and fetch Dannel home from the cider-wring ; he's tired, and you too," said her uncle, smiling at Lettice, who had been running out all day, assisting greatly, as she considered, in all the processes.

"We've pretty nigh done now," said the old man, wearily, as she steered him carefully up among the piles of fruit. "He's a beautiful man, yer uncle, he is. I'm terrible much obliged to he. Madam Wynyate's trimming comikle in her temper, contrary like, and I should just ha' toddled away years ago if it weren't along o' he : I knows that well enough."

"But you do a greatish deal, Dannel, up and down," said the child, as he stumbled among the apples.

"Well," answered the old man, with some pride, "I'm tottery, and creaky, and wheezy, but I can twiddle about after summat as well as most on 'um, and I'm none for wasting my time as the young 'uns is. There ayn't narrer an orchat anywhere as this 'un ; and that ratheripe* allays do bear such a wonderful deal o' his† fruit," he said, looking about with the curious affectation of being able to see common among the blind. "The moon's at the full to-night, an' they'll well-nigh finish wi' the cider, I take it, with the help o' she."

"Them marks on her face looks so plain," mused Lettie. "What is they, Dannel ?"

"That's the man as stole a nitch o' wood o' the Sabbath-day," replied he, "and he were sot up there for a warnin' to them as wants it—I don't. Yer granny allays thinks ill o' folk ; she takes 'um by the wrong end, she do," muttered he, his wrongs rankling in his mind as they approached the house, and he heard Mrs. Wynyate's voice stern and sad.

"So yer uncle left yer the money after all, and not to Susan a bit," she was saying, rather reproachfully, to Amyas. "I've just a heerd it from the man wi' the cider-wring, and he heerd it over at Wallcott's when he were there. Wallcott laughed he did, and said how could ye be so soft, and pressed for money so bad ?"

"Susan were poor and wanted it," replied Amyas, in an apologetic tone.

"And who was poor and wanted it here, I'd like to know ?" grumbled his mother, as she went off to the cider. She was proud of his conduct for all this, though upon principle she spoke (and at great length too,) when things were wrong, but kept silence when they were right, which is a depressing and dispiriting way of conducting life.

* "Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies."—*Lycidas*.

† "If the salt have lost (his) savour."—"Its" does not occur once in our translation of the Bible, and only three times in Shakspeare.

"There, that's just him and her all over," continued the old man. "I mind one day when Norton Lisle were a-comin' after yer mother. . . . What's come o' yer father?" he said, suddenly turning to the child.

"My father!" cried the little girl, surprised. No one ever mentioned him, and he had quite died out of her little life; but the word recalled old times in her childish recollections of something painful, though she could not have told what they were.

"Yea, he ayn't much of a one for to boast on, but he is thy father anyhow, and thou oughtest not to be kep from knowin' o' him, as I take it they does by thee," the old man went on with some glee. "I likes to rip up a mystery," he mumbled to himself, "and 'twill vex madam."

"Why doesn't he come here?" asked the little girl in an awe-struck whisper.

"I take it thy grandmother couldn't abide he, and then he's a deal up and down adoin' what he likes, and he have just adropped thee into anither's nest like a cuckoo, and goes about the world free like, wi'out incumbrances. I heerd on him last down at Southport, sailin' for furrin' parts, Australia or 'Merikee, or some o' them. P'raps he mayn't come back agin at all, who knows? But don't ye tell madam as I talked on him," said he, as they entered the house.

Amyas's fortunes seemed now to improve a little. There was a further fall of timber that winter, the price of wheat rose, as did that of bark, and he was able to tide over some of his difficulties, for a time at least.

He began to look a little after Lettice's education, and she learnt more of the three R's than Mrs. Wynyate at all approved of.

"As for reading, there isn't much use, as I see, for more o' that than 'll do the Catechism;" and as for arithmetic, anything beyond what was required to calculate the pounds of butter was sheer robbery of the dairy. Still, Lettice was quick at learning, and got on in spite of her grandmother's warnings of all sorts of evil connected with knowledge, ever since the days of grandmother Eve.

A considerable part of one's education, however, is that which nobody has given or is answerable for: the accidental inferences, the chance ideas, which are sown like seeds before the wind, and bear fruit, no one knows how or whence.

The old "dark" man was exceedingly fond of her, but, with the love of power so common among the blind, he exercised it somewhat despotically.

"And what d'ye hear o' yer uncle?" he would say, importantly. "I'm in hopes as he's a got plenty to do, and does it, not all along like yer father. What is it yer little hymn says?—'And Satan finds some mischief still for idle folk.' And, I take it, the Devil's always uncommon handy for to tempt them as holds out their hands to him. Ye know he's like a ragin' lion up and down the world."

"Was he ever seen lately, d'ye think, Dannel?" whispered Lettice, almost too frightened to put her query.

"Bless ye, child, yes! Lambourne seed he as plain as the church

tower, at the turn in the Deep Lane, like a calf wi' saucer eyes, and I heerd o' one as had a sore struggle wi' him for's soul, dying down at Fordingdean."

Pleased with the effect he produced, the old man's stories grew more and more dreadful, and his accounts of the real presence of the Evil One began to take possession of the young girl's imagination. One night, as she was preparing for her little evening devotions, it seemed to her as if "he" was himself present in bodily form in the room, to prevent her from uttering her prayer. St. Agnes herself could hardly have seemed a more unlikely subject for the assaults of the fiend than the young girl, standing trembling in the shadow of the still moonlight, and looking the very emblem of purity, in her white night dress. The wide old latticed window had been partially walled up to save the tax, and the single high upright stone mullion which remained, with its horizontal bar, threw the shadow of a cross on the floor and over her little bed, as she had often liked to see. At length, though in a paroxysm of terror, she knelt down close by it as a sort of protection and pronounced the holy words in his despite, and then, taking her Bible in her hand—the recognized amulet against the power of the Devil—she turned with desperate courage to face and confound him. To her infinite amazement and relief there was no one to be seen. He was not there!

From that time she began to doubt whether there might not be a little mistake, and whether Satan was in the habit of walking into people's houses in this familiar way, at the present time, whatever might have been the case in former days. Her scepticism did not reach further, for was there not a formidable picture of the Witch of Endor in the folio Bible, which she always turned over in an agony of dread lest the horrid image should haunt her dreams, though, Eve like, having once "peeped" at it, her caution was of little use.

Some time after she was sitting by her uncle as usual on the Sunday evening, as she dearly loved to do, when the whole world seemed at rest, and he had time for "discourse." It was still broad sunshine, and warm, which disposes to courage; and private, which disposes to confidence.

"Uncle Amyas," said she, suddenly, "did you ever see the Devil your own self?"

"No, child," he answered, laughing (and a great comfort the laugh was to her mind), "nor any one else that I know of. Are ye afraid of meeting him some day out walking?"

"But, uncle Amyas," said she, evading the home thrust, "ye know it's said about his coming roaring to Bunyan, and how he was always hearing of him calling out all manner of temptations, and many folk have seen him too in the books, or how should they ha' told how he was made, ye know? Them horns and his tail, ye know. Somebody must have seen him sometime." The *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Bunyan's Life* were almost her only reading beside the Bible.

"Well, my little 'un," answered Amyas, slowly, "for a' that I don't believe that he's seen. Evil temptations is strong enow in our own hearts in a' conscience, and p'r'aps they thinks of him till they believe they sees him wi' their eyes. I can't say; but I take it, even if the Devil is as they tell on, that he's felt, not seen. No; I don't believe in him one bit," he went on with sudden energy; "'twould be a good God and an evil God if he's so strong and powerful as all that. Don't thee mind in Job how Satan's just sent out like one of the other angels—that's a very different concern. Don't ye be frightened that way, my little mayd. Ye needn't be afraid o' him nor any other 'bugs'; 'God is about us in all our ways, both to will and to do; not that other one."

Lettie was trying to prove the worth of her convictions in real life. Her grandmother's teaching had borne its fruit: she honestly believed in her own exceeding wickedness, over which, by fits and starts, she lamented herself with most sincere sorrow. A curious feeling of unreality about it sometimes came over her, but she put it from her with horror, and only esteemed it a fresh proof of her "parlous state." An odd volume of *Fox's Book of Martyrs* had got into the house, together with a dozen cotton umbrellas and a pile of manuscript violin music—effects from a bad debt (somehow Amyas often had bad debts)—and the stories of their sufferings had a grim attraction for her imagination. One night, as she sat in the window reading and considering whether she could have suffered for her faith like Latimer, or like Faithful in Vanity Fair—the one was to her as real an historical event as the other—she put her finger close to the candle to try. She held it manfully for a second or two, but snatched it away when it began to sting, and she cried bitterly afterwards as she bewailed her extreme sinfulness, proved thus by this searching test. She was carrying out her little experiments in philosophy and religion like greater folk.

A Dialogue on Finality.

Scene—A terrace, commanding a valley opening to the west, with woods, meadows, and water.

Time—Evening.

Alexis. Lovely as this valley is, and well suited to the smiling calmness of a summer's evening, there are changes in it, since the old times when I first remember it, which are not all for the best.

Isidore. The common complaint when we get on in life, is it not? Peaches are so different from what peaches were! However, there is truth in what you say concerning our "happy valley." The tyrant of the age has laid his iron rod on its back since the old times you remember, and has straightened the natural meanderings of the stream into artificial lines to tally with the march of his footsteps.

Alexis. That is one thing: Nature has been coerced. But there is another and a contrary cause of the deterioration I speak of. Nature has in some sense been allowed *too much* play. The trees have grown so prodigiously in breadth and height that the other features of the scenery have lost their importance in the landscape. The foreground dwarfs and also chokes the distance.

Isidore. This is perhaps too frequently the case in our part of the country. The natural growth of foliage is very rapid with us; and proprietors have a pertinacity in keeping up their woods: a sort of pride, I believe, looking upon every individual oak and elm as a title to honour,
 α κτήμα εἰς δόξαν.

Alexis. An umbrageous tree, no doubt, is a thing of glory. But it may be wrongly placed, and blot out greater beauties: blue sky, sunshine, swelling lawns, and soft suggestive horizon.

Isidore. Perhaps I should agree with you, but I am not master here. Many men—and Urbanus is one—shrink from "making a clearance," under the idea that an unsightly gap or ragged edge will be left, which it will take many years to soften down sufficiently. It is the worst of landscape gardening that one has both to plant and to clear for futurity.

Alexis. And often not for one's own futurity at all. Life is so hurried, and Nature so leisurely.

Isidore. And yet we call man Nature's master.

Alexis. Much in the same sense in which the imperious slave-driver is master of the sluggish slave. "The more massa strike me the more I can't work," says the slave. It is children only who plant a garden with cut flowers. You must adapt your requisitions to Nature's capabilities

before you can get any thing out of her. To work her against her own laws, is simply of no use at all. She smiles at you scornfully, and punishes you by her inveterate rigidity.

Isidore. Ah! what a mockery is this "mastery" on man's part after all. The creature of a day lording it over the phenomenal sequences of centuries!

Alexis. The Geneva watch you wound up last night claiming to hold out with an eight-day clock! No novel topic of regret. Theophrastus, the Greek philosopher, dying, as tradition reports, at the age of a hundred and seven, complained in his last moments of the perverse appointment of destiny, in that, while to the unreasoning deer of the forest and fowls of the air she had accorded a length of life far surpassing that of man; to him, the noblest of nature's works, the crown of all created beings, the lord and master of other animals, she had granted but a scanty measure of time on earth; too scanty for doing more than beginning those achievements of thought and skill of which he alone and no other animal is capable. Were man ordained to hold the raven's lease of life, and the raven's years curtailed to the present span of man, how much better adjusted would have been the economy of the world: how would knowledge have increased, how would art and science have been brought to perfection; and to the human agent himself, how much more hopeful would have been his studies, his plans, his projects!

Isidore. The ideas of Theophrastus about animal longevity bordered on the mythical, perhaps. But let us fall in with the train of thought suggested. Let us imagine man's years restored at once to the patriarchal pattern. Fancy Sir Isaac Newton still at work with Lord Rosse's telescope to help him! Or fancy Faraday not stopped short at his seventy years' term, but with two or three centuries before him, in which to trace out at leisure the many delicate threads of analysis and inference already begun in his mind! Or fancy Shakspeare a Methuselah!

Alexis. I doubt whether Shakspeare would have found that the lapse of ages altered much his focus of observation for the grand and petty passions of human nature. His Macbeth and Falstaff repeat themselves pretty accurately in the successive generations of our kind. "Ein alter Mann ist stets ein König Lear," as Göthe says.

Isidore. If man's allotted term were to be prolonged in the way Theophrastus suggests, it might, perhaps, be difficult to find room for our population. There ought, at least, to be some principle of "natural selection" at work. The great intellects should be self-perpetuated, in virtue of their strength; those who could be little better than Strulbrugs in extreme old age should be allowed to die off—the sooner the better. In fact, I should suggest a process of either indefinite compound multiplication or indefinite compound subtraction to be applied to each man's vitality at the apex of life, according as he had proved his just claim to the one or the other. Then, indeed, we should have an Utopian world.

Alexis. But the world being in this respect not Utopian, but very much the reverse, I am fond myself of "drawing a moral" (like the duchess in *Wonderland*), especially when there is anything in the actual conditions of the world which seems to give force to the old familiar facts.

Isidore. Which moral? *Ars longa, vita brevis*—therefore we should be diligent schoolboys, and make the most of our time? or the equally venerable, but somewhat contradictory one, Life is short: don't care a doit for anything it has to offer? The discrepancy between which, by the way, always reminds me of a conversation which used to be reported to me as having passed between two excellent ladies of the "Clapham sect," when that sect was much more numerously represented among the *élite* of the professional world than it is now-a-days. Lady X. and Lady Y. were two matrons whose spouses had recently been baroneted for services to the State or to science. Lady X. had long given up the snares of the world, not only from her religious opinions, but also because she was an invalid, and had one foot always more or less in the grave, as her friends supposed. "Dear Lady Y.," she said to her sympathetic visitor one day, "you will be surprised, perhaps, at what I am going to say, but I think of going to the next drawing-room." Lady Y. "Dear friend, are you in earnest?" Lady X. (with a celestial sigh). "Yes, dear Lady Y., life is short!" Lady Y. (with an equally celestial smile). "I know, dear Lady X., life is short; but why, may I ask—I don't quite understand—why is that a reason for your going to court?" Lady X. "Because, dear friend, there is no knowing how soon I may be called, and if I miss this drawing-room it may be too late. I have a duty to my family," &c.

Alexis. Well, neither of these is precisely the view of the case that occurs to me now, having just put down the newspapers, with their stirring records, and turned out to enjoy the splendours of this delicious evening.

Isidore. Very good reasons, it cannot be denied, both against dying and against going to court as a matter of taste.

Alexis. As to your second, the *non curare* lesson, it is true, of all arguments to abate pride and self-sufficiency, there is none half so forcible, because none so demonstrably and undeniably true, as this of the shortness of life. Trite it is, to the last degree of triteness. The oldest of poets and the oldest of prophets were as familiar with it as we who have seen thousands more of years filled with the fitting shapes of generation after generation. "As the leaves of a tree so are the generations of man." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble:" and Homer saw in the wrath of Achilles, and the pleasures of Paris, and the vengeance of Atrides, with all their attendant strife and enterprise, but so many harvests for Fate's autumnal blast; and Job, bowed down with the anguish which lengthens time more than the flight of minutes, pleaded that man's insignificant duration on earth might well exempt him from God's chastisements as from God's regard.

Isidore. If you once get upon this topic there is no end to the noble army

of moralists you may rally to your standard, from Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus to Pascal and Thomas à Kempis ; from Thomas à Kempis and Pascal to the *Spectator* and Dr. Johnson ; all flourishing their weapons in the same cause, though displaying noticeable varieties in the cut of their uniform. But, seriously, does not this anomaly in the order of nature put the complacent theology of the "Bridgewater Treatises" a little out of court ? Why is man, to whom to understand and utilize Nature is so interesting and ennobling an employment, fitted to it so incongruously in the article of duration ?

Alexis. It is, indeed, a most cogent argument that this is not the best of all possible worlds.

Isidore. Might we not go farther ? does it not to some extent militate against the notion of an overruling Providence ? This want of fitness, of symmetry, of apparent reason in the order of things, is it not what one would call accident or failure in any analogous display of terrestrial agency ? In fairness the sceptic should be allowed to set this against the nice adaptation of means to ends which constitutes the usual induction from final causes to a supreme intelligence.

Alexis. On my mind it has a precisely opposite effect. In its uniformity and inflexibility this law of the brief duration of man's life leads me to infer some purpose not less surely than do other arrangements which appear more directly harmonious and appropriate. And if the purpose is one which does not explain itself in the present stage of existence, we are driven, perforce, to extend our vision to a wider sphere.

Isidore. Assuredly, if we measure the personal gains of man's existence on earth with his desires and capacities, the result is poor enough.

Alexis. We must not confound the particular thought which I incline to dwell upon, with another which tends in the same direction but does not hit precisely the same point. One of the most effective *a priori* arguments for a future existence to man is grounded on the inadequate scope afforded here for his affections and aspirations. Whereas the beasts of the field have in the present state of being their full satisfaction, possessing no appetites but what nature's resources are abundantly able to gratify ; man, on the contrary, has distinct cravings not limited by sense ; and both the kind and degree of happiness to which he aspires in his highest moments are infinitely beyond what life under its best conditions can supply. This argument for a spiritual immortality is striking, and, in its ultimate bearings, irrefutable ; but it is not every one who, from experience, will accept it. There are many, unquestionably, who do *not* require more than this world can give them ; who find its return of interests sufficient to content their moral and intellectual being ; who, if they ever have been conscious of the restless demands of the highest genius or goodness, have learned so to tone them down to the ordinary conditions of existence that the gains and achievements of each day and year leave no room for unsatisfied feeling.

Isidore. Surely such perfect content is not possible? None are exempt from the sorrows of life, sickness, loss of friends, of fortune.

Alexis. Not usually; but chance, or Providence, may spare them life's sharper sorrows; and sound bodily constitution, healthy stomach and strong nerves, quick circulation and happy temper, go far to make this world a paradise for whatever a man wishes to find in it. Coleridge, not himself a personage weighted with happiness, said, "Existence itself gives a claim to joy. . . . We have to earn the earth before we can think of earning heaven." The presumption of an immortality, then, grounded on unsatisfied instincts, though very sound, looking at human nature on one side of its constitution, need not, does not, come home to all men at all times, and may be set aside by the sanguine, the light-hearted, the busy, the successful. But it is precisely these classes whom the conviction of life's *brevity* must most powerfully touch. It is the happy and active-minded, those who find this stage of being and its countless interests enough for them, those who wish to live, who see the use, the importance of living,—who are most calculated to wonder, to regret, to cavil at the inexorable fact that life *must* end.

Isidore. I think it is true that life is least loved by those who have fewest ideas. Of how little account is it generally held by the debased millions of Indians and Chinese. Among ourselves, too, the uneducated poor, to whom life affords such scant entertainment, show often marvellously little disinclination to dying; whereas, under the pressure of much pain and privation, I have known the virtuous and highly cultivated express a strong desire for prolonged existence, and that, not only for the sake of those they are leaving behind, but because they have a keen relish for life on their own account. Nay, even when content to go, it is not uncommon to see minds of the highest tone keeping fast hold on life's general concerns to the very last. Bunsen read the *Cologne Gazette* along with the Bible on his death-bed. A friend of mine, an excellent and earnest woman, expressed her thankfulness on the last morning of her mortal illness that she had lived to hear of the inauguration of the Atlantic Telegraph.

Alexis. There can be no doubt that the present age is one in which the moral of finality is peculiarly fitted to strike the imagination. It is an age more perhaps than all others instinct with thought and energy and movement and progress; an age when, if man were but as long-lived as the tree he plants, his self-confidence could scarcely fail to be overweening. During the last thirty years the world has lived at a rate out of all proportion to former times. Inquiry has been more daring, discovery more rapid than it ever was before; and that in all directions: discovery by sea and land; discovery among the primeval elements of the world's formation; discovery among the buried monuments of pre-historic life; discovery tending to throw argument, if not light, on man's origin; discovery in the combinations of chemistry, in the agencies of light, in the mechanic forces of the elements, in the secrets of the electric current;

discovery even in the remote and apparently useless geographical mysteries which have puzzled mankind for so many centuries. What wonder that men should tread the earth more proudly when they have held it on the rack, as it were, tortured it, and compelled it to confess its secrets ?

Isidore :—

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind fury with th' abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.

Alexis. Yes : a Brunel and a Stephenson, after spanning precipices and piercing rocks, and beating back the waves of the sea, die in the prime of manhood, with the embryo plans of many similar triumphs over seeming impossibilities in their brain. Speke (the discoverer, not the "discovered,") all eagerness to prove that he has solved the oldest and most famous of geographical puzzles, passes into sudden darkness with all his arguments and his memories,—is cut off, like his predecessor Bruce, by the merest accident of home life. Cavour, while reconstructing Italy with a will and an insight such as, alas ! he has been able to delegate to none of his fellow-politicians, is called to a world where Italy's reconstruction is a thing of nought. It would often seem as though Fate delighted in cutting off, in the fulness of their powers, precisely those who seem to have the firmest grip on vitality in virtue of their conquering activity.

Isidore. The twenty-four hours of the watch are little enough ; but when it stops midway, our calculations are indeed thrown out.

Alexis. These are the more striking incidents ; but in reality the longest life reads the same lesson quite as impressively as that which is, as we say, prematurely cut short. Some accomplish exactly the task they were fitted for, and so far their existence may be said by onlookers to be complete ; but more commonly each life is a tale of partial achievements, fragments begun and postponed ; and those who have in some sort brought their day's work to a rounded conclusion, may not hope to witness its effect on futurity. Brougham, dying at the age of ninety, sees his foreign settlement of Cannes developed into a fashionable watering-place ; but he leaves England still agonizing to give her people the rudiments of a national education, notwithstanding his vaunted diffusion of Useful Knowledge forty years ago.

Isidore. And in Parliamentary Reform he sees the boundary marks of Finality altogether carried away ; washed into the distance, like fences before a winter's flood !

Alexis. In connection with this subject, a very suggestive contrast, it seems to me, might be drawn between the mental habits of mankind in our own days and in former ages. Time was when Finality used to be predicated in every domain of intelligence. Schoolmen's logic defined the limits of philosophy : natural science might never dream of outstepping the letter of Scripture ; art even was stereotyped in the conventional

representations of Byzantine and "pre-Raphaelite" painters. Religious faith of course was absolutely crystallised in dogmatic creeds.

Isidore. And is so still; at all events with a large section of society.

Alexis. Well, Conservatism no doubt here does vigorous battle still with the spirit of the age. But this is a perilous controversy, and has no immediate concern with what I am saying. I mean, that to minds trained in these old methods of thought, it is conceivable that the end of life may have seemed more natural and fitting, so to speak. Now, the advanced intellect of our time recognizes Finality in no one department of phenomenal observation; and yet, given up as a law in philosophy and science—here is the momentous, it may truly be said the awful contrast—it is precisely as rigid in its application to human life as it ever was. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further:" no, though thou art burning to grasp just one fact more, and that fact, duly located in the storehouse of truth, remains—eternally remains—whether thou know it or not.

Isidore. Vanity and vexation! Then let the cynic rule the hour. "Eat and drink: for to-morrow we die."

Alexis. Happily the practice of the cynic does not always go along with his creed: at least a sense of moral obligation will frequently be found underlying the professions even of the atheist.

Isidore. Perhaps so; but if the theory which bids us live for pleasure only, obtains sometimes where the practice does not, conversely you will find abundance of mortals living the epicurean life who do profess to believe in a hereafter.

Alexis. What men who simply follow the inclination of the senses may do or profess I am scarcely concerned to say, nor am I in any way syllogizing on the "Evidences." I only wish to point out the impressions forced, as it seems to me, on man's moral consciousness by an unbiassed view of his position in this life relatively to the obvious—duties I will not call them, for that may be begging the question; but high and animating interests which appeal to his intellectual nature and invite his agency. Reverting to what I said just now about Finality being the accepted framework of thought in the Middle Ages generally, it is curious to observe how the first inklings of natural philosophy would immediately bring into the foreground this bugbear of the shortness of life, as though by the irrepressible force of the contrast. Roger Bacon, that half mythical prototype of his great namesake, after descanting on the wonderful discoveries and inventions which he had either realized or guessed, passes to schemes for the prolongation of life as the crowning aim of human industry, and believes confidently in their success, though he owns the utmost they could do would be to extend by some years the term to which destiny had irrevocably fixed certain outside limits. Somewhat similar to the consciousness of our own days in this respect must have been, I should imagine, that of the sixteenth century; the age of maritime discovery, of enfranchised thought, of romantic anticipation.

Isidore. Yes, there was a powerful shifting then of the fences of Finality

in most things. I can quite believe how forcibly the sense of *disappointment* you have been describing must have addressed itself to such minds as Francis Bacon's, Raleigh's, Shakspeare's. How they must have panted to keep a little longer abreast of the world's advance!

Alexis. To Bacon's and Raleigh's, no doubt; but again, I must say, not in quite the same manner to Shakspeare's. Raleigh must have yearned to know what the New World would contribute to the history and welfare of humanity; Bacon must have felt almost a *right* to witness the progressive revelations of inductive science.

Isidore. Shakspeare, perhaps you think, guessed all things by intuition.

Alexis. No; but Shakspeare's was not pre-eminently an *inquiring* mind. His was the imagination which dwells among old familiar facts, and brings to light the mystery and the glory of what all men, even the commonest, already know and feel. To Shakspeare, perhaps, death, as the highest poetical fact of all, might have had an interest and a charm without which human nature, viewed in its imaginative aspects, would have been incomplete,—the epic poem without its climax; the tragedy, or comedy, without its fifth act.

Isidore. Ah! what would one give to know the visions which opened upon that many-windowed soul, when the irremediable sense of failure came over his vital powers after the last convivial bout at Stratford!

Alexis. Azrael, we may be sure, had an ineffable smile for him! To discoverers, on the other hand, whether in science or politics—to all whose special impulse it is to investigate or adjust the conditions of existence here below—death is purely an interruption, an anomaly; truly the “blind fury, with the abhorred shears.” Here is the stronghold of the pietists. This world is not your home, they say, therefore care not for it; live apart from its concerns. The next world is the only reality; despise things present, and pass on.

Isidore. And if you refuse the scientific philosopher or the cynic the right to solve life's problem, will you deny that the pietist at least is right? Better make friends at once with the scythe-and-hour-glass visitor, since we cannot dismiss him from our doors. Better wrap ourselves in sack-cloth all day long, and hold ourselves ready for our grave.

Alexis. The only answer to which is, as it is to the plea of the cynics, what a world would this be if all men so acted! In the case of the pietists, a world of ignorance and squalidity, in which even Ignatius Loyolas and Hindoo fakirs would find it difficult to live. But, in fact, pietists themselves, we shall find, lay comparatively little stress on the shortness of individual life; they have ever preferred to predict the end of the world, for this they know is a more certain damper to secular energies. Obstinate mortals *will* care for the interests of this accustomed stage while there is a succession of human beings to carry on the tradition; but if the world itself vanishes into nothing, then indeed—

Isidore. Then indeed, having their tents burned behind them, the travellers to the New Jerusalem have no temptation to look back or falter

in their onroad. Well, if only to lessen their regret at having to make this sacrifice of the present to the future, it may be natural that each indication of fulfilled prophecy should be caught at as proving the advent of a new heaven and new earth. But the propensity may arise from nobler motives—from impatience for a more perfect state of things.

Alexis.

So trust the men, whose best hope for the world
Is ever that the world is near its end,
Impatient of the stars that keep their course,
And make no pathway for the coming judge—

says our latest—perhaps our most distinguished—poetess. Anticipation leads to nothing. We must simply take the conditions of our being as we find them; and the pietists, to my mind, weaken the moral of Finality by rebuking one side of human nature and forbidding its outgrowth. The full grandeur of the Supreme is only felt when we are entirely conscious of the vastness, as well as of the limitations of human capacity. I have sometimes thought, however, that the fanatical dream of the Fifth Monarchy men in Cromwell's time really grew out of their ardour to reform the social and political state of England in their time. I mean, that in their burning zeal for more just and equal conditions among men, they came to anticipate a new avatar of the deity as the readiest and most certain method of securing these objects, and of reconciling the reforming instincts of man, and his innate desire to perpetuate the work of his brain and hands, with the doctrines of his religion.

Isidore. To make it *worth while*, in fact, for a Christian to be busy about the affairs of this world at all?

Alexis. Just so. The belief on which Vane and his associates acted was that their schemes of Church Reform and Chancery Reform were actually leading up to the Utopian polity of the saints.

Isidore. Well, whether they have dreamt Fifth Monarchy dreams or not, you will allow that the most devout and excellent of God's servants have ever been those who have done most to make this world a place of comfortable habitation for others.

Alexis. All the while preaching that sorrow and privation are best for man; that comfort is a snare, and ease a delusion. This is one of the oddest among the many odd contradictions of human nature.

Isidore. But, again, may not the beneficent pietist say, Improve the individual socially and intellectually here, and you give him the better chance of becoming fit for an eternity in heaven?

Alexis. If so, I repeat, he contradicts his other, or ascetic, theory; a theory which, to their honour be it said, pietists are much more prone to enforce against themselves than against their fellow-creatures. But it is obviously nothing short of hypocrisy to pretend this as the motive for the philanthropic legislation of modern times. We labour because there is a surpassing fascination of interest in making the conditions of our present existence as noble as may be, in adorning, or only extending, its

little span. To take mere every-day instances : what are our hospitals and our "homes" for but to preserve those in life for whom we profess to believe that death would be the greatest of gains ?

Isidore. And who *must* go their way, like the rest of mankind, after their seventy or eighty years are over. That is true. We do, indeed, live in a mass of contradictions. Our irrepressible interest in making the world bright and comfortable belies the pietist ; the brevity of life confutes the worldly philosophers. I really believe the Fifth Monarchy men must have been happiest in their way of viewing the matter. But facts went so wofully against them. It was by no means the reign of the saints that was coming on the earth in the latter part of the seventeenth century, but only the very unsaintly reign of Charles II. What say you to the modern Millennarians ?

Alexis. The Millennarians are too vague, or rather their images of a kingdom of the Redeemer on earth are too transcendental, have too little reference to the actual politics and philanthropies of men, to meet the point under consideration. Their favourite programme would snap the thread of secular progress altogether.

Isidore. There is yet another way of viewing the matter—that of the Comteist. The Comteist finds refuge in his worship of Humanity. If the world's progress can only be realized by each unit of mankind for a limited period in extent, at least for Humanity in its collective life, for the great onward-surging wave of aggregate existence, there is hope and stability ?

Alexis. The Comteists would drag a man's soul upwards with a rope made of sand. Their attempt to invest a verbal abstraction with the attributes of Divinity is surely more futile than any task of Tantalus.

Isidore. Nevertheless, short of praying to Humanity, or to the memories of any of its representatives—which I grant seems a perverse confounding of grammatical tenses, to say the least—Humanity, I take it, means something, whether in Comteist philosophy or in common sense.

Alexis. Yes. If individual human life is fragmentary and disappointing, then Humanity in the gross means a great many such fragments and disappointments—nothing more. Humanity can never rise above the jog-trot business of living its seventy or eighty years, eating, drinking, and sleeping through boyhood, manhood, and old age. As to making a god of its nobler qualities, why, the workman in Isaiah who fashioned one out of the trunk of a tree, after warming himself and cooking his food with the remainder of the material, hit upon quite as brilliant an idea.

Isidore. Still, if, as you admit, the world's advancement is a worthy aim, even in matters which have positively no reference to another stage of being, then a good man should be so disinterested that this thought will be quite sufficient to soothe him in passing for ever from its atmosphere.

Alexis. The question is not whether he will be soothed or not, but what the effect must needs be on his reason and moral sense. Here am I, he will think, feeling a giant will within me to combat difficulties and

increase man's resources on earth, yet am I utterly unable to give either to my life or to his life that permanence which alone can render it logically worth while to spend time and thought in the endeavour. *What* is it, who is it, that steps in and whirls away me and those that come after me as inexorably as my foot crushes the reptile intent on building up his little ant-heap in my path? A power it must needs be. And can any power be lord over man's purposes and genius save One that takes up all purpose and all genius into itself, and knows the secret of reconciling what *we* cannot reconcile,—life's brevity with life's value and self-contained interest? Such a power implies eternity; and eternity is vast enough to find answers for every riddle,—ay, and to find congenial occupation, perchance, for the faculties that have been furbished up on the needs of this poor planet of ours.

Isidore. Which planet, by the way, will soon be left in twilight dimness, for see, the sun is setting.

Alexis.—

Sie rückt und weicht, der Tag ist überlebt,
Dort eilt Sie hin, und fördert neues Leben.

Isidore.

O dass kein Flügel mich vom Boden hebt
Ihr nach und immer nach zu streben!

What a flood of crimson and gold glinting through the branches of those elm-trees!

Alexis. Alas! Urbanus has, in his conservatism, let those elm-trees grow till they leave us little space for beholding sunset or anything else beyond them. He, at least, has not been anxious to change the world's institutions out of zeal for futile adjustments. And, viewed on one side of the question, he is doubtless right; it is scarcely worth while: in half an hour the sunset glow is over and we go indoors and retire to bed.

Colonial Parliaments.

BEFORE proceeding to do what is the chief purpose of this paper, namely, to give the reader some idea of the actual everyday working of parliamentary government in the colonies, it may be well to describe, briefly, the constitutions of the principal settlements. With Mr. Merivale's exhaustive work to refer to, no intelligent Englishman need plead ignorance on this subject; but as probably few persons not immediately interested in colonial politics have studied those essays, a few words of explanation may be desirable.

In Canada, the leading North American colony, responsible government has been established since 1846. Under this system the colony is ruled by a Governor, whose assent is necessary to every legislative measure before it can come into force, and with whom rests the distribution of patronage, and the general representation of the Crown. He is advised by an Executive Council, or Cabinet of Ministers, all of whom are responsible to the legislature, and by being outvoted on any vital question can be turned out of office. It follows, as a matter of course, that Ministers must also be elected by the people. The legislature, or local parliament, in all the Canadian colonies comprises two houses, the upper one being usually styled Legislative Council, and the lower, House of Assembly. In some cases, the Crown, through the Governor, has nominated the former, as it does still in the case of many West Indian colonies. In most instances, however, the upper house is composed of members possessing a far higher property qualification than is necessary for the lower and popular assembly. Where the Crown nominates, however, the qualification may refer only to age and nationality. Canada presents the only instance of a confederated group of British colonies. It now possesses, over and above the parliaments of its several provinces, a federal parliament, by which all matters pertaining to the common interests of the whole, such as defence, fiscal regulations and finance, are considered and determined. Thus a "dominion" has been constituted, not unlike, in some respects, its great republican neighbour, and for all practical purposes as free and self-reliant.

All the Australian colonies are governed by responsible Ministers, who come in and go out at the pleasure of legislative majorities, and very variable that pleasure seems to be to the mind of distant observers. Of the five great provinces of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, the two last appear to be the least subject to ministerial changes. New Zealand, owing to its natural

peculiarities, differs somewhat from any other group of colonies. It is divided into nine different provinces, each being internally managed by a Superintendent and a Provincial Council of at least nine members. These, however, merely control the affairs of the district. There is a General Assembly, composed of the Governor, a Legislative Council, and a Representative Assembly. To this government has lately been intrusted the entire control of the native population.

We have to go to the West Indies in order to find relics of the old type of constitution, but even amongst those beautiful but slowly advancing islands the representative principle has edged itself into most of the governments. Trinidad is one of the exceptions. There the Legislative Council consists of six official and six non-official members, all of whom are nominated by the Crown. St. Lucia, together with Turk's and Caicos Islands, are under the same form of rule. But in no case is responsible government established. The councils of advice by whom the Governors are assisted, called "Administrative," "Executive," or "Privy," as the case may be, are all nominated by the Crown, and hold their seats at pleasure. These restricted concessions of representative government are compatible with the needs and the social structure of those mixed communities, made up in great part as they are of coloured people. Jamaica, the oldest and most important of the British West Indies, enjoyed, until the other day, one of the most liberal constitutions possessed by any of the islands, but, as we all know, the force of events has led to its withdrawal, and to the substitution of a much simpler system.

The vast South African settlements are behind the world in political development, as they are in material progress. In 1852 a "popular" constitution was granted to the Cape Colony, and it has remained in force, unaltered, ever since. It is peculiar in providing for two purely elective houses of representatives without at the same time conceding any measure of responsibility. The Governor's Executive Council consists exclusively of officers appointed by the Crown, who hold their posts during pleasure. From time to time the expediency of introducing responsible government has been mooted and discussed. But the Cape people are slow and conservative, and have so far desisted from praying for any change, although they have probably only to ask in order to get it. Natal, which as a colony is wholly independent of the Cape, is also ruled by a Governor and an irresponsible Executive Council. It has a small Legislative Council, three-fourths of whose members are elected by the people. This colony, too, has so far abstained from asking for larger powers of self-government. One or two detached Eastern dependencies may be placed in this group. The populous and wealthy island of Mauritius, despite the rare activity of its agricultural interests and its commercial importance, is smitten by no political aspirations. It rests content with its small nominee legislature of seventeen members, only ten of whom are unofficial, while they are selected by the Governor

from the landed proprietors of the island, "and submitted to her Majesty in Council for approval and confirmation." In Ceylon the government is administered in just the same way, the proportion of unofficial nominee members being only, however, as six to nine. An agitation is at present going on there in favour of a more popular form of government. Hong Kong, and all the West Coast African settlements, come into the same category. In all of them the ignorant coloured classes far outnumber the white people, and as, if I mistake not, no direct legislation has yet made colour a bar to the exercise of the franchise, it is obvious that responsible government in such cases would be somewhat dangerous.

It is a mistake to suppose that universal suffrage goes hand in hand with responsible government. Victoria and South Australia are the only colonies where the ballot is in full operation; electors have in other cases to possess a property qualification. The nature and amount of this differ according to circumstances. In Jamaica, before the insurrection, electors were required to be freeholders to the extent of 6*l.* a year, or pay 20*l.* a year as rent, or have an annual income of 50*l.*, or pay 1*l.* taxes yearly, or hold 100*l.* as a bank deposit. In Natal the qualification is 50*l.* freehold or 10*l.* annual rental, and the same suffices for a member. In the Canadian provinces the qualification is much the same. In South Australia a freehold of 50*l.* annual value, or a leasehold of 20*l.* annual value, or 25*l.* rental, qualify to vote for members of the Legislative Council. For the House of Assembly, however, all registered electors, being naturalized subjects, are entitled to vote. In New Zealand electors must possess a freehold estate worth 50*l.*, or a leasehold worth 10*l.* a year, or be a householder paying a clear annual rental not less than 5*l.* a year. In the Cape colony the qualification of electors for both Houses is an annual income of 50*l.*, or of 25*l.* with board and lodging. These facts will suffice to show that, with one or two exceptions, the franchise in our colonies is by no means so democratic as many people believe it to be.

Having glanced at the electors let us look at the members of colonial parliaments, and see how they do their work. People in England can scarcely be too indulgent to these colonial senators. English legislators have a set course to walk in; tried principles and precedents to guide them; six centuries of political history to inform their minds and influence their action. Colonial legislators have literally a wilderness before them to traverse and to civilise; they have no forerunners to appeal to, no rule, no example. The House of Commons consists for the most part of men born, or fitted for the posts they fill. The colonial parliament in most cases is made up of men who are still working in one way or another for a livelihood, who were seldom educated with any view to law-making, who often have to sacrifice private interests to the duties they have undertaken. The English senate counts its members by the hundred, and amongst them are men who devote themselves to particular branches

of legislation or subjects of debate; they are helped, moreover, by all the extraneous aids of old and efficient officers, counsel, libraries, and sources of reference. The colonial legislature seldom can boast of more than 100 members. That of Canada, before the federation, had 130 members; New South Wales has 72; the Cape Colony, 68; Victoria, 60; South Australia, 36; New Zealand, 53; Queensland, 32; Natal, 16; and the West Indian colonies in proportion. I refer here to the lower houses only; the upper houses, of course, contain much fewer members. Upon the shoulders of these small assemblies is placed all the burden of making laws for a new country.

And a new country, it must be remembered, requires legislation specially adapted to its needs. It cannot import wholesale and ready-made the jurisprudence of another country—far older, far more populous, other in all respects than itself. As a rule the common law of England is quoted in all colonial courts; but the circumstances and necessities of most of our dependencies differ so much from those of England, and the social structure of colonial communities is so different, that distinct statutes on almost every subject have come to be enacted. In some colonies two or three distinct systems or sets of law exist side by side. In all the South African colonies, for instance, Roman Dutch law is the common law of the land; but the statute law created during the last few years is largely impregnated with the spirit of modern English jurisprudence. In Natal the legal machinery is yet more complex. There, in addition to Roman Dutch common law and colonial statute law, administered and practised by English judges and English lawyers, is a form of *lex non scripta* known as Kafir law. Wherever colonies have been conquered from other European nationalities—as in the cases of Canada and Mauritius—contrarieties must be found. It will be easily understood that under such circumstances the task of legislation is unusually difficult.

Then, again, a new country requires much for it that has been done and settled long ago in old countries. None but a colonist can fairly estimate the “wants” of a young and thriving colony. The case of a legislature just beginning its work in a lately occupied land is much the same as that of the settler in it. He has nothing before him but a bare—not even that if it be bush-land—piece of ground. He has to provide shelter upon it, to inclose it, to plough it, to irrigate it, to plant it, and make a road to it. So it is with the little parliament. The young state wants a good deal more than mere laws. Its harbour, the gateway of its commerce, has to be made accessible; roads have to be formed, often through dense forests, across deep morasses, or over rugged hills; buildings are required for use as court-houses, prisons, offices, and places of defence; a postal system has to be established; police have to be organized, and in some cases a system of protection devised. All these purposes—and they are the bare necessity of any civilized community, however poor or small—call for money. Revenue,

therefore, must be provided, and this, perhaps, is the hardest of all the legislative tasks; for, great as are the needs of the country, its paying capacity is lamentably small. Men go to colonies to make fortunes, not to spend them; and in the earlier years of these settlements most colonists find it difficult to live in anything like comfort; and yet revenue must be provided. The consequence is that a customs' establishment is formed, stamp-duties imposed, taxes levied, and a fiscal system created. Speaking generally, customs' dues yield at least a third of most colonial revenues; land in several instances contributes largely; stamps are liberally drawn upon; but few direct taxes are imposed. The British tax-payer, who considers himself a sorely burdened person, often grumbles at the demands made upon his pocket; and yet he only contributes at the rate of 2*l.* 13*s.* per head, while some colonies are taxed at the rate of 6*l.* per head. No colony, I believe, is taxed, counting heads, so little as Great Britain; but you hear comparatively little complaint on this score, and the popular belief in England is that the tax-gatherer is one of the nuisances from which colonists are free. Nor can it be said that taxation presses as heavily upon people in the colonies as upon people at home. Far from it. The former are better able to pay taxes; the taxes themselves are seldom offensive; and, lastly, the tax-payer gets a more tangible return for his outlay than he does in England. He feels that the money paid to government is all expended upon works or services that are necessary to the progress and well-being of the country; and he knows that it is in his power, through the medium of the legislature, at any time to demand an account of moneys raised by taxation, or to diminish the burdens imposed upon the community. Nevertheless, although this facility of raising revenue, caused by the readiness of colonists to bear a considerable per-centage of taxation, may seem to lighten the responsibilities of the legislator, it requires no small amount of financial husbandry to find funds sufficient for the clamorous wants of the colony. The power of granting or stopping supplies is the chief function of all popular colonial legislatures. At first it is not uncommon to see this power used rather lightly. Before the novelty of self-government has worn away, the young parliament has generally tried its "prentice hand" at this exciting but dangerous game. Should a Governor prove unyielding or antagonistic, it is usually sought to coerce him by rejecting the Supply Bill. When this is done the public expenditure required for the carrying on of government has to be disbursed under the Governor's treasury warrant, and thus an unpleasant responsibility is thrown upon him. This is a situation, however, that seldom occurs, although the weapon is a potent one in the hands of an opposition.

Perhaps no service under the Crown requires so many positive and exceptional qualifications as the post of Colonial Governor. That functionary holds many of the relations of royalty without its absolute supremacy. He represents his sovereign, but is at the same time a

servant and dependant. He stands between two fires. On the one side are ranged the Crown and its advisers, with whom rest solely all his chances of promotion in a service where the openings are few and the risks are many. On the other side are the colonists and their representatives, whose confidence and goodwill it is his first object to win, but whose views and interests are often directly opposed to the policy he has to carry out. Imagine the tact and diplomacy that are needed during times of popular agitation, to avoid giving offence to the colonists without losing favour at home.

Having said thus much about the public aspects and constitutions of colonial parliaments, let me try to describe more minutely the way in which they conduct their business. It is a notable fact that, from the least to the greatest, all of these new-born senates strive to copy closely the forms and usages of the home Parliament. The House of Commons is the model common to them all. Their rules and orders are based upon those in force at St. Stephen's; their ceremonies can be traced to Westminster. In the case of Canada, and the larger Australian colonies, the legislatures are a very fair imitation too. At Ottawa and Melbourne there are houses of parliament which would not discredit a European capital. These fine buildings have their halls of assembly, their lobbies, committee-rooms, refreshment-rooms, and reporters' apartments. Members of colonial assemblies are as a rule far more comfortably seated than are English M.P.'s. In the larger bodies much state and formality is kept up. The Speaker is robed and bewigged; the officers of the house are in costume; and there is a mace. Parliamentary language is strictly exacted: members are all "honourable," and the mention of a name is the sole right of an outraged speaker. The profoundest respect is required from the public: privilege is scrupulously enforced. In this respect colonial legislatures are, naturally enough, disposed to go to great lengths. It is not long since an Australian assembly kept the printer of a too censorious newspaper in durance vile for some little time.

The colonist is not always a radical or democrat; if possessed of any property, he is most often a decided conservative. It is suggestive to watch the career of a man as he rises in the world in those distant states. When he starts in his new sphere he is radical enough, and is pretty sure to be an anti-government man; as he goes on he acquires property, and as his property increases his radicalism abates, until at last the democrat becomes a downright Tory. The process is simple and explicable enough, and it seems to me that politicians at home might study to some advantage the effect which property, education, and position produce among people who, before they migrated, may have been wanting in one, or another, or all of these blessings.

For knowledge of parliamentary life in its crudest and primitive form, you must go, not to Victoria or Canada, but to one of the smaller colonies, where the assemblies boast fewer members, and less splendour. In the one I am most familiar with, a general election is looked forward to as

affording a chance of excitement. If party spirit runs high, so much the better fun. Candidates are not nominated in public as at home, but are first requested, in writing, to stand for such and such a constituency. This requisition, if signed by a sufficient number of electors, is nomination enough. As these documents have to be lodged with the respective magistrates a certain number of days prior to the day of election, exciting scenes now and then occur when candidates arise at the eleventh hour. It is usual for candidates to make known their political creed in the form of a published address, and in due time to appear before a public meeting, when they sometimes receive hard treatment. Canvassing a constituency, say of a hundred and fifty voters scattered over a district as large as Yorkshire, is no light, though it may be a simple matter. As many of the electors live out of the reach of inns, the would-be member has often to claim the hospitality of those whose votes he is soliciting. It will thus be seen that colonial senators are generally known in person to most of their constituents. And here I may make a brief digression by way of pointing out one of the unpleasant conditions of public life in colonies. Where "everybody knows everybody," private and personal matters enter largely into public relationships. It is not as it is at home. Journalists are dealt with, not as impersonal exponents of public opinion, but as men and neighbours, whose individual qualities, domestic surroundings, and private circumstances are brought to bear, either in the place of, or as adding force to, arguments used in the course of controversy. Members of parliament, and all men placed in the position of public representatives, suffer a like exposure. Likes and dislikes that have nothing to do with questions at issue, or with actual fitness for office, too often govern criticism of public action. In colonies, and especially the smaller ones, all men are brought into constant contact with each other; all are familiar with the daily concerns of their neighbours. This state of things must necessarily interfere with a fair and impartial judgment of men and measures, and is unquestionably the most objectionable feature of colonial life.

When the day of a contested election arrives it is heralded in the towns by the display of flags and rosettes, and in the country by the setting forth at the polling-places of solid viands for the refreshment of tired and hungry voters. It is common for each candidate to provide an open table for all comers. These hospitalities are dispensed without much reference to the colours worn by those who enjoy them. Political purists may object to them as one form of bribery, but they cannot be fairly regarded in that light. Most country voters have to ride greater or lesser distances before they can record their votes; and it would be deemed a shabby return for their time and trouble to let them go back hungry and thirsty. There is perhaps too much drinking on these occasions, but it is difficult to see how the evil can be prevented.

Many amusing incidents occur at these elections. Where candidates

are well matched the voting often runs very close, and the constituencies are so small in point of numbers that every vote is of moment. As the hour draws near for the closing of the poll excitement gets intense : horses are despatched twenty or thirty miles to fetch lagging voters ; special messengers come tearing in on foaming horses from the other polling-places, for in county elections persons are allowed to vote in their own ward or district. I recollect one case in which the numbers remained evenly balanced during the three days' duration of the poll. At the close of the poll at the central point one candidate was left, reckoning up the latest returns from the other places, in possession of a clear majority. Only one more return was wanted, and that was not thought likely to affect the result. Congratulations were showered upon the successful man : he was cheered and complimented : speeches were demanded of him : he was in a glow of self-complacency ; at last, as darkness was setting in, the clatter of hoofs was heard along the road. All eyes were bent upon the eager messenger. When he rode up, hot and panting, he shouted out the respective numbers he had to disclose. This final return left the expected victor just one below his rival !

When the time for opening the session has arrived, the members leave their ploughs, their flocks, their stores, their offices, possibly their workshops, and proceed to the capital. Some of them—the single men, to wit—will amble thither on horseback. The time of meeting (I speak now of one colony in particular) is usually during the glorious winter months, with bright skies and cool breezes day after day. Pleasant work is it to ride through a long journey at this season : little fear of bad weather disturbs the mind : in the morning you start betimes, as the sun appears above the clear hilly horizon. The road, dry and perhaps dusty, stretches ahead over great swelling heights, where not a trace of verdure yet is visible : winter grass-fires have swept the country and blackened the landscape. Under a dull sky the scene would be dismal enough, but the contrast of the dark earth with the blue overhead ; the crimson bunches of the drooping amaryllis, which springs up from the ashes of the burnt pastures ; the gleam of granite precipices, and the shimmer, now and then, of running waters, give a peculiar charm to the darkened face of nature. If it be late in the winter, the hills and downs are clothed with vivid green, and spangled by innumerable flowers. If it be early in the season, the long nights are lit up by the blaze of linked and ever twisting grass-fires, which take all imaginable lines, as they sweep over the hills, to be quenched, at last, in some wider stream, or stopped by a bare belt of road.

Much as the horseman enjoys his journey at such a time, the family man, who has to travel by ox-waggon, may enjoy his trip as much. He journeys at the rate of fifteen miles a day, reading, shooting, botanising on the way. Then he has the busy camp-work of the night, the jovial gathering round the blazing fire, the solemn gleam of the stars through the tent door or from behind the waggon-flap.

In due time the members have all reached their goal, and, dressed in their best, they hie to their senate-chamber, to be addressed by the Queen's deputy.

Let me describe that hall of legislation, whose every plank and rafter—I cannot say pillar and panel—are familiar to me through long years of contemplation. Imagine a square, thatched, whitewashed building of one storey, with three great staring windows on either side of a big double door, and you have the presentment of this parliament house before you. It was built before British occupation, by a Dutch community of Puritan principles; and it looks the Roundhead to the life, the thatch being cropped close all round, with scarcely an indication of eaves. In front of this uninviting barn—for it is nothing more—one or two companies of her Majesty's troops are drawn up. Their band is in attendance; their tattered colours flutter in the breeze, their coats are as spotless, their belts as white, their weapons as burnished, as though they were under review in Hyde Park. A large and motley crowd is gathered without. Sturdy English colonists from the country come in “to see the Council opened,” and to see too how their new member deports himself: huge, heavy, listless Dutchmen; brisk and dapper citizens, to whom the sight is no novelty; laughing and chattering natives, with a sprinkling of Hindoos and a swarm of small boys, compose the most orderly and well-behaved mob. We enter a “lobby,” on either side of which is a small room, eighteen feet square, whereof one is the “clerks’ room,” and the other is committee-room, library, refreshment-room and waiting-room, all in one. These are the only two apartments in the building besides the council-chamber. That solemn meeting-place is now thronged with gaily-dressed ladies—“the fashionable world” of the young colony—who crowd the galleries and fill benches placed round the seats of the members themselves. The room is a bare, cool apartment, with whitewashed walls and no ceiling, the roof being open to the thatch. Round a horseshoe table are ranged fifteen arm-chairs. In this respect colonial legislators are better off than Members of the House of Commons. They have set seats of their own, and a writing-table. On a dais at the upper end is placed the Speaker's chair, now covered with a kaross, and overhung by a rude shield bearing the royal arms.

The noise of cannon is heard: therefore we know that the viceregal cortège has left Government House on its way down. Soon from the side rooms the members file in and take their places. Such as have the right to wear a uniform appear in character. Lawyers wear their gowns; one clerical member appears in a robe; the gown of a bachelor of laws clothes one distinguished figure. The Speaker comes forth in ordinary costume, robe and wig not being yet indulged in. A sound as of arms being grounded is heard, and then the “National Anthem” is struck up by the band, accompanied by a feeble cheer. A minute longer, and the Governor, the representative of royalty, enters, in Windsor uniform, and attended by a brilliant military and official staff. At his entrance the whole assembly

rise, and stand until bidden to be seated. Having received a ponderous manuscript from the hands of his private secretary, his Excellency then delivers his opening speech. This address is seldom so brief and flavourless as are royal speeches elsewhere. It seems to have had more for its model the "message" of an American president. It usually takes at least half an hour to deliver, and enters fully into the state of the country and the questions of the day. These productions are oftentimes marked by considerable ability. As soon as the speech is read, the Governor, who has been seated all the time, hands it to the Speaker, bows, and departs. And thus the ceremonial ends.

The first work of the session is to prepare a reply to the speech. This is done by a select committee, and until the document has been presented and debated little other business goes on. The "House," as it fondly calls itself, meets twice a week during the early afternoon, and three times a week at seven o'clock in the evening. There being no chaplain, prayers are always read by the Speaker, generally to a bare quorum. Concerning the business of the House, it is enough to say that it is conducted in strict accordance with the parliamentary practice of England: these young legislatures cling with rare tenacity to the customs and guidance of their forefathers. May's *Parliamentary Practice* is the textbook of every member. Burke's *Precedents* holds the place of honour at the right hand of the Speaker. It will be easily understood that there is frequent recourse to both these authorities. On the whole, however, the amenities of parliamentary life are pretty well preserved. In cases of disputed procedure and personal altercation, as well as generally in carrying on the work of the House, the want of experience and of precedent causes no little inconvenience and loss of time. Sometimes difficulties occur for which the records of the home Parliament supply no remedy. Such an one arose last year. The Speaker had gone on an expedition into the far interior: his travels took him further than he had contemplated, and brought him to a district where, when the winter came, his cattle were left without grass, and it was impossible for them to return. He had no horses within reach; his sole dependence for means of conveyance was upon ox-waggons, and they could not be moved. Thus came it to pass that when the session arrived there was no Speaker, and a deputy had to be appointed. The matter was not much considered, as the absence of the Speaker was expected to be but brief. Weeks passed on, however, and the missing man came not, nor was any tidings of him received. At last, a fortnight before the session closed, he suddenly arrived, having made all speed from the far frontier where horses became obtainable. He resumed his seat and made his explanation. One or two members, however, seemed to think that the Speaker should have taken more pains to inform the council of his movements, and raised a question as to the legality of their late proceedings. Precedents were sought for; May was overhauled; Hansard was exhausted; but the long record of the English Parliament failed to

supply an analogous case, or to lay down any rule of action for such an emergency. The possibility of such an occurrence as a Speaker being left out of the reach of posts in the wilderness had never presented itself to the minds, or happened within the experience, of English Parliament writers. Only one course remained. An Act had to be passed legalising the proceedings of the council during the Speaker's absence.

In the little assembly I now speak of what are known as "scenes" seldom take place. In its earlier years they were more common, but of late the behaviour of members has been singularly sedate; far too much so in fact for the public taste. Liberal accommodation is provided for visitors, more than half the room being given up to them. In a town where there are no regular places of amusement the debates of a public assembly offer some attractions, and whenever a question of special interest is coming on, or whenever a "row" is expected, the galleries are crammed. The ladies find much enjoyment on the latter occasions, and are by no means satisfied with the dull good temper in fashion now. Of course now and then a man of low character, or a violent partisan, will find his way into the House, and do his best at times to convert that arena into a bear-garden. Such men, however, soon find their level, and their gambols being met with contempt or indifference, they are gradually given up.

Although the franchise is so low in all colonies as to admit almost every resident to a participation in it, electors as a rule choose the best man within their reach. It often happens that the large property-holders decline to accept a seat in the legislature, and thus it is that professional and commercial men,—lawyers, doctors, journalists and merchants,—are more fully represented than any other class. One small assembly consists at this moment of two planters, five farmers, one storekeeper, one land-owner, one merchant, one retired captain, and one newspaper editor. With regard to the first two classes, it must be explained that men of good birth and high attainments often have that designation in colonies. For instance, one of those I have named as "farmers" is an accomplished Oxford man of considerable ability. A colonial "farmer" means the owner of many thousand acres, who may have fallen back, perhaps, upon bucolic pursuits after a life of military or intellectual action in Europe. I think I may safely and truthfully say of all colonists, that they feel much personal pride in the reputation of their legislative bodies, and with few exceptions—and there are such undoubtedly—choose for their representatives men who, by their known capacities and social position, are best fitted for the office.

In the assembly I have more particularly referred to, the arts of oratory are not much practised. It is no easy matter to become rhetorical in a chamber consisting of fifteen unenthusiastic men seated far apart round a horse-shoe table. Burke no doubt found it hard sometimes to speak as he did to the thin Houses which we are told he had often to address. How much worse must it be for men who have none of

his fine afflatus, and whose auditors are not more numerous than a small dinner-party. But debates are none the less wordy. Colonial legislators like to hear themselves talk, and occasionally a burst of real eloquence is heard as the spirit moves some more ambitious member to attempt an upward flight.

Most of the real work of the House is done, as at home, by committees. At least a dozen of these are generally engaged at the same time in taking evidence concerning or reporting upon the leading questions of the day. When it is remembered that all this work is imposed upon fifteen men, without the Speaker, and that there are always some absent or idle members, it will be seen that the post of a colonial legislator is no sinecure. While the session lasts, members who stick to their work are occupied more or less all the day, and to a late hour at night. The committees meet in a small bare room, whose pleasantest feature is an open fireplace, a mere cavity in the wall, disclosing a hearth, where at night a great log-fire roars and blazes, and a large tin boiler supplies tea and coffee for the members. Many a soothing pipe, many a cheerful cigar, have been smoked in that room. There, after many a fierce debate, have contending members drowned their squabbles in a comfortable cup of coffee.

Ajaccio.

It generally happens that visitors to Ajaccio pass over from the Cornice coast, leaving Nice at night, and waking about sunrise to find themselves beneath the bare and frowning mountains of Corsica. The difference between the scenery of the island and the shores which they have left is very striking. Instead of the rocky mountains of the Cornice, intolerably dry and barren at their summits, but covered at their base with villages and ancient towns and olive-fields, Corsica presents a scene of solitary and peculiar grandeur. The highest mountain-tops are covered with snow, and beneath the snow-level to the sea they are as green as Irish or as English hills, but nearly uninhabited and uncultivated. Valleys of almost Alpine verdure are succeeded by tracts of chestnut wood and scattered pines, or deep and flowery brushwood,—the “*macchi*” of Corsica, which yields shelter to its traditional outlaws and bandits. Yet upon these hill-sides there are hardly any signs of life; the whole country seems abandoned to primeval wildness and the majesty of desolation. Nothing can possibly be more unlike the smiling Riviera, every square mile of which is cultivated like a garden, and every valley and bay dotted over with white villages. After steaming for a few hours along this savage coast the rocks which guard the entrance to the bay of Ajaccio, murderous-looking teeth and needles ominously christened *Sanguinari*, are passed, and we enter the splendid land-locked harbour, on the northern shore of which Ajaccio is built. About three centuries ago the town, which used to occupy the extreme or eastern end of the bay, was removed to a more healthy point upon the northern coast, so that Ajaccio is quite a modern city. Visitors who expect to find in it the picturesqueness of Genoa or San Remo, or even of Mentone, will be sadly disappointed. It is simply a healthy, well-appointed town of recent date, the chief merits of which are that it has wide streets, and is free, externally at least, from the filth and rubbish of most southern seaports.

But if Ajaccio itself is not picturesque, the scenery which it commands, and in the heart of which it lies, is of the most magnificent. The bay of Ajaccio resembles a vast Italian lake—a *Lago Maggiore*, with greater space between the mountains and the shore. From the snow-peaks of the interior, huge granite crystals clothed in white, to the southern extremity of the bay, peak succeeds peak and ridge rises behind ridge in a line of wonderful variety and beauty. The atmospheric changes of light and shadow, cloud and colour, on this upland country are as subtle and as various as those which lend their beauty to the scenery of the lakes, while the sea below is blue and rarely troubled. One could never get tired with

looking at this view. Morning and evening add new charms to its marvellous sublimity and beauty. In the early morning Monte d'Oro sparkles like a Monte Rosa with its fresh snow, and the whole inferior range puts on the crystal blueness of dawn among the Alps. In the evening violet and purple tints and the golden glow of Italian sunset add a new lustre to the fairy-land. In fact, the beauties of Switzerland and Italy are curiously blended in this landscape.

The soil and vegetation of the country round Ajaccio differs very much from that which one is accustomed to on the Cornice. There are very few olive-trees, nor is the cultivated ground backed up so immediately by stony mountains; but between the sea-shore and the hills there is plenty of space for pasture-land, and orchards of apricot and peach trees, and orange-gardens. This undulating country, green with meadows and watered with clear streams, is very refreshing to the eyes of Northern people, who weary of the bareness and greyness of Nice or Mentone. It is traversed by excellent roads, recently constructed on a plan of the French Government, which intersect the country in all directions, and offer an infinite variety of rides or drives to visitors. The broken granite of which these roads are made is very pleasant for riding over. Most of the hills through which they strike after starting from Ajaccio are clothed with a thick brushwood of box, ilex, lentise, arbutus, and laurustinus, which stretches down irregularly into vineyards, olive-gardens, and meadows. It is indeed the native growth of the island; for wherever a piece of ground is left untilld, the "macchi" grow up, and the scent of their multitudinous aromatic blossoms is so strong that it may be smelt miles out at sea. Napoleon, at St. Helena, referred to this fragrance when he said that he should know Corsica blindfold by the smell of its soil. Occasional woods of holm oak make darker patches on the landscape, and a few pines fringe the side of inclosure walls or towers. The prickly pear runs riot in and out among the hedges and upon the walls, diversifying the colours of the landscape with its strange grey-green masses and unwieldy fans. In spring, when peach and almond trees are in blossom, and when the roadside is starred with asphodels, this country is most beautiful in its gladness. The macchi blaze with cistus flowers of red and silver. Golden broom mixes with the dark purple of the great French lavender, and over the whole mass of blossom wave plumes of Mediterranean heath and sweet-scented yellow coronilla. Under the stems of the ilex peep cyclamens, pink and sweet; the hedgerows are a tangle of vetches, convolvuluses, lupins, orchises and alliums, with here and there a purple iris. It would be quite impossible to describe all the rare and lovely plants which are found here in a profusion that surpasses even the flower-gardens of the Cornice, and reminds us of the most favoured Alpine valleys in their early spring.

Since the French occupied Corsica they have done much for the island by improving its harbours and making good roads, and endeavouring to mitigate the ferocity of the people. But they have many things to contend against, and Corsica is still far behind the other provinces of

France. The people are idle, haughty, umbrageous, fiery, quarrelsome, fond of gipsy life, and retentive through generations of old feuds and prejudices to an almost inconceivable extent. Then the nature of the country itself offers serious obstacles to its proper colonization and cultivation. The savage state of the island and its internal feuds have disposed the Corsicans to quit the seaboard for their mountain villages and fortresses, so that the great plains at the feet of the hills are unwholesome for want of tillage and drainage. Again, the mountains themselves have in many parts been stripped of their forests and converted into mere wildernesses of *macchi* stretching up and down their slopes for miles and miles of useless desolation. Another impediment to proper cultivation is found in the old habit of what is called free pasturage. The highland shepherds are allowed by the national custom to drive down their flocks and herds to the lowlands during the winter, so that fences are broken, young crops are browsed over and trampled down, and agriculture becomes a mere impossibility. The last and chief difficulty against which the French have had to contend, and up to this time with apparent success, is brigandage. The Corsican system of brigandage is so very different from that of the Italians, Sicilians, and Greeks, that a word may be said about its peculiar character. In the first place it has nothing at all to do with robbery and thieving. The Corsican bandit took to a free life among the *macchi*, not for the sake of supporting himself by lawless depredation, but because he had put himself under a legal and social ban by murdering some one in obedience to the strict code of honour of his country. His victim may have been the hereditary foe of his house for generations, or else the newly made enemy of yesterday. But in either case, if he had killed him fairly, after a due notification of his intention to do so, he was held to have fulfilled a duty rather than to have committed a crime. He then betook himself to the dense tangles of evergreens which we have described, where he lived upon the charity of country-folk and shepherds. In the eyes of those simple people it was a sacred duty to relieve the necessities of the outlaws, and to guard them from the bloodhounds of justice. There was scarcely a respectable family in Corsica who had not one or more of its members thus *alla campagna*, as it was euphemistically styled. The Corsicans themselves have attributed this miserable state of things to two principal causes. The first of these was the ancient bad government of the island: under its Genoese rulers no justice was administered, and private vengeance for homicide or insult became a necessary consequence among the haughty and warlike families of the mountain villages. Secondly, the Corsicans have been from time immemorial accustomed to wear arms in everyday life. They used to sit at their house-doors and pace the streets with musket, pistol, dagger, and cartouch-box on their persons; and on the most trivial occasion of merriment or enthusiasm they would discharge their fire-arms. This habit gave a bloody termination to many quarrels, which might have ended more peaceably had the parties been unarmed, and so the seeds of *vendetta* were constantly being sown,

Statistics published by the French Government present a hideous picture of the state of bloodshed in Corsica even during this century. In one period of thirty years (between 1821 and 1850) there were 4,319 murders in the island. Almost every man was watching for his neighbour's life or seeking how to save his own; and agriculture and commerce were neglected for this grisly game of hide-and-seek. In 1853 the French began to take strong measures, and, under the *Préfet Thuillier*, they hunted the bandits from the *macchi*, killing between 200 and 300 of them. At the same time an edict was promulgated against bearing arms. It is forbidden to sell the old Corsican stiletto in the shops, and no one may carry a gun, even for sporting purposes, unless he obtains a special licence. These licences, moreover, are only granted for short and precisely measured periods.

In order to appreciate the stern and gloomy character of the Corsicans it is necessary to leave the smiling gardens of Ajaccio, and to visit some of the more distant mountain villages—Vico, Cavo, Bastelica, Bocognano or Corte, any of which may easily be reached from the capital. Immediately after quitting the seaboard we enter a country austere in its simplicity, solemn without relief, yet dignified by its majesty and by the sense of freedom it inspires. As we approach the mountains the *macchi* become taller, feathering, man-high above the road, and stretching far away upon the hills. Gigantic masses of granite, shaped like buttresses and bastions, seem to guard the approaches to these hills; while, looking backward over the green plain, the sea lies smiling in a haze of blue among the rocky horns and misty headlands of the coast. There is a stateliness about the abrupt inclination of these granite slopes, rising from their frowning portals by sharp *arêtes* to the snows piled on their summits, which contrasts in a strange way with the softness and beauty of the mingling sea and plain beneath. In no landscape are more various qualities combined; in none are they so harmonized as to produce so strong a sense of majestic freedom and severe power. Suppose that we are on the road to Corte, and have now reached Bocognano, the first considerable village since we left Ajaccio. Bocognano might be chosen as typical of Corsican hill-villages, with its narrow street, and tall tower-like houses of five or six stories high, faced with rough granite, and pierced with the smallest windows and very narrow doorways. These buildings have a mournful and desolate appearance. There is none of the grandeur of antiquity about them; no sculptured arms or castellated turrets, or balconies or spacious staircases, such as are common in the poorest towns of Italy. The signs of warlike occupation which they offer, and their sinister aspect of vigilance, are thoroughly prosaic. They seem to suggest a state of society in which feud and violence were systematized into routine. There is no relief to the savage austerity of their forbidding aspect; no signs of wealth or household comfort; no trace of art, no liveliness and gracefulness of architecture. Perched upon their coigns of vantage, these villages seem always menacing, as if Saracen pirates, or Genoese marauders, or bandits bent on vengeance, were still for

ever on the watch. Forests of immensely old chestnut-trees surround Bocognano on every side, so that you step from the village streets into the shade of woods that seem to have remained untouched for centuries. The country-people support themselves almost entirely upon the fruit of these chestnuts; and there is a large department of Corsica called Castigniccia, from the prevalence of these trees and the sustenance which the inhabitants derive from them. Close by the village brawls a torrent, such as one may see in the Monte Rosa valleys of Piedmont or the Apennines, but very rarely in Switzerland. It is of a pure green colour, foaming round the granite boulders, and gliding over smooth slabs of polished stone, and eddying into still deep pools fringed with fern. Monte d'Oro, one of the largest mountains of Corsica, soars above, and from his snows this purest water, undefiled by glacier mud or the *débris* of avalanches, melts away. Following the stream we rise through the *macchi* and the chestnut woods, which grow more sparsely by degrees, until we reach the zone of beeches. Here the scene seems suddenly transferred to the Pyrenees; for the road is carried along abrupt slopes, thickly set with gigantic beech-trees, overgrown with pink and silver lichens. In the early spring their last year's leaves are still crisp with hoar-frost; one morning's journey has brought us from the summer of Ajaccio to winter on these heights. Snow-drifts stretch by the roadside, and one by one the pioneers of the vast pine-woods of the interior appear. A great portion of the pine-forest (*Pinus larix*, or Corsican pine, not larch, as Dr. Bennet has miscalled them in his book on the Mediterranean climate) between Bocognano and Corte has recently been burned by accident. Nothing can be more forlorn than the black leafless stems and branches emerging from the snow. Some of these trees are mast-high, and some mere saplings. Corte itself is built among the mountain fastnesses of the interior. The snows and granite cliffs of Monte Rotondo overhang it to the north-west, while two fair valleys lead downward from its eyrie to the eastern coast. The rock on which it stands rises to a sharp point, sloping southward, and commanding the valleys of the Golo and the Tavignano. When we remember that Corte was the old capital of Corsica, and the centre of General Paoli's government, we are led to compare the town with Innsprück, Meran, or Grenoble. In point of scenery and situation it is scarcely second to any of these mountain cities; but its poverty and bareness are scarcely less striking than those of Bocognano.

The whole Corsican character, with its stern love of justice, its furious revengefulness and wild passion for freedom, seems to be illustrated by the peculiar elements of grandeur and desolation in this landscape. When we traverse the forest of Vico or the rocky pasture-lands of Niolo, the history of the Corsican national heroes, Giudice della Rocca and Sampiero, becomes intelligible; nor do we fail to understand some of the mysterious attraction which led the more daring spirits of the island to prefer a free life among the *macchi* and pine-woods to placid lawful occupations in farms and villages. The lives of the two men whom we have mentioned are so

prominent in Corsican history and are so often still upon the lips of the common people, that we may perhaps be allowed to sketch their outlines in the foreground of the *Salvator Rosa* landscape which we have described. Giudice was the governor of Corsica, as lieutenant for the Pisans, at the end of the thirteenth century. At that time the island belonged to the republic of Pisa, but the Genoese were encroaching on them by land and sea, and the whole life of their brave champion was spent in a desperate struggle with the invaders, until at last he died, old, blind, and in prison, at the command of his savage foes. Giudice was the title which the Pisans usually conferred upon their governor, and Della Rocca deserved it by right of his own inexorable love of justice. Indeed justice seems to have been with him a passion, swallowing up all other feelings of his nature. All the stories which are told of him turn upon this point in his character; and though they may not be strictly true, they illustrate the stern virtues for which he was celebrated among the Corsicans, and show what kind of men this harsh and gloomy nation loved to celebrate as heroes. While a young man, Giudice was attached to a very beautiful woman, who treated him much as Dalilah treated Samson, and finally shut him up in prison and mocked him. Giudice effected his escape, gathered his friends together, and took his perfidious mistress captive. The revenge which he inflicted upon her for her want of faith is too terrible to mention here. But it shows how passionately powerful was the sense of justice in his heart, how the remembrance of injury and wrong could drown all other feelings even for the woman that he loved. On another occasion after a victory over the Genoese, he salted the eyes of his slain enemies and sent them in a barrel to Genoa, with a message that the captives in his hands should be released if their wives and sisters came to sue for them. The Genoese ladies embarked and arrived in Corsica, and to Giudice's nephew was entrusted the duty of fulfilling his uncle's promise. In the course of executing his commission the youth was so smitten with the beauty of one of the women that he dishonoured her. Thereupon Giudice had him at once executed. Another story shows the Spartan justice of this hero in a less savage light. He was passing by a cowherd's cottage, when he heard some young calves bleating. On inquiring what distressed them, he was told that the calves had not enough milk to drink after the farm people had been served. Then Giudice made it a law that the calves throughout the land should take their fill before the cows were milked.

Sampiero belongs to a later period of Corsican history. After a long course of misgovernment the Genoese rule had become unbearable. There was no pretence of administering justice, and private vengeance had full sway in the island. The sufferings of the nation were so great that the time had come for a new judge or saviour to rise among them. Sampiero was the son of obscure parents who lived at Bastelica. But his abilities very soon declared themselves, and made a way for him in the world. He spent his youth in the armies of the Medici and of the French Francis,

gaining great renown as a brave soldier. Bayard became his friend, and Francis made him captain of his Corsican bands. But Sampiero did not forget the wrongs of his native land while thus on foreign service. He resolved, if possible, to undermine the power of Genoa, and spent the whole of his manhood and old age in one long struggle with their great captain, Stephen Doria. Of his stern patriotism and Roman severity of virtue the following story is a terrible illustration:—Sampiero, though a man of mean birth, had married an heiress of the noble Corsican house of the Ornani. His wife, Vannina, was a woman of timid and flexible nature, who, though devoted to her husband, fell into the snares of his enemies. During his absence on an embassy to Algiers the Genoese induced her to leave her home at Marseilles and to seek refuge in their city, persuading her that this step would secure the safety of her child. She was starting on her journey when a friend of Sampiero arrested her, and brought her back to Aix, in Provence. Sampiero, when he heard of these events, hurried to France, and was received by a relative of his, who hinted that he had known of Vannina's projected flight. "E tu hai taciuto?" was Sampiero's only answer, accompanied by a stroke of his poignard that killed the lukewarm cousin. Sampiero now brought his wife from Aix to Marseilles, preserving the most absolute silence on the way, and there, on entering his house, he killed her with his own hand. It is said that he loved Vannina passionately; and when she was dead he caused her to be buried with magnificence in the church of St. Francis. Like Giudice, Sampiero fell at last a prey to treachery. The murder of Vannina had made the Ornani his deadly foes. In order to avenge her blood, they played into the hands of the Genoese, and laid a plot by which the noblest of the Corsicans was brought to death. First, they gained over to their scheme a monk of Bastelica, called Ambrosio, and Sampiero's own squire and shield-bearer, Vittolo. By means of these men, in whom he trusted, he was drawn defenceless and unattended into a deeply wooded ravine near Cavo, not very far from his birthplace, where the Ornani and their Genoese troops surrounded him. Sampiero fired his pistols in vain, for Vittolo had loaded them with the shot downwards. Then he drew his sword, and began to lay about him, when the same Vittolo, the Judas, stabbed him from behind, and the old lion fell dead by his friend's hand. Sampiero was sixty-nine when he died, in the year 1567. It is satisfactory to know that the Corsicans have called traitors and foes to their country Vittoli for ever. These two examples of Corsican patriots are enough; we need not add to theirs the history of Paoli—a milder and more humane, but scarcely less heroic leader. Paoli, however, in the hour of Corsica's extremest peril, retired to England, and died in philosophic exile. Neither Giudice nor Sampiero would have acted thus. The more forlorn the hope, the more they struggled.

Among the old Corsican customs which are fast dying out, but which still linger in the remote valleys of Niolo and Vico, is the *Vôcero*, or funeral chaunt, improvised by women at funerals over the bodies of the dead.

Nothing illustrates the ferocious temper and savage passions of the race better than these *vóceri*, many of which have been written down and preserved. Most of them are songs of vengeance and imprecation, mingled with hyperbolic laments and utterances of extravagant grief, poured forth by wives and sisters by the side of murdered husbands and brothers. The women who sing them seem to have lost all milk of human kindness, and to have exchanged the virtues of their sex for Spartan fortitude and the rage of furies. While we read their turbid lines we are carried in imagination to one of the cheerless houses of Bastelica or Bocognano, overshadowed by its mournful chestnut-tree, on which the blood of the murdered man is yet red. The *Gridata*, or wake, is assembled in a dark room. On the wooden board, called *tola*, the corpse lies stretched; and round it are women, veiled in the blue-black mantle of Corsican costume, moaning and rocking themselves upon their chairs. The *Pasto* or *Conforto*, food supplied for mourners, stands upon a side-table, and round the room are men with savage eyes and bristling beards, armed to the teeth, keen for vengeance. The dead man's musket and pocket-pistol lie beside him, and his bloody shirt is hung up at his head. Suddenly the silence, hitherto only disturbed by suppressed groans and muttered curses, is broken by a sharp cry. A woman rises: it is the sister of the dead man; she seizes his shirt, and holding it aloft with Mænad gestures and frantic screams, gives rhythmic utterance to her grief and rage. "I was spinning, when I heard a great noise: it was a gunshot, which went into my heart, and seemed a voice that cried:—Run, thy brother is dying. I ran into the room above; I took the blow into my breast; I said, 'Now he is dead, there is nothing to give me comfort. Who will undertake thy vengeance? When I show thy shirt, who will vow to let his beard grow till the murderer is slain? Who is there left to do it? A mother near her death? A sister? Of all our race there is only left a woman, without kin, poor, orphan, and a girl. Yet, O my brother! never fear! For thy vengeance thy sister is enough!

Ma per fà la to bindetta,
Sta siguru, basta anch ella!

Give me the pistol; I will shoulder the gun; I will away to the hills. My brother, heart of thy sister, thou shalt be avenged!" A *vótero* declaimed upon the bier of Giammatteo and Pasquale, two cousins, by the sister of the former, is still fiercer and more energetic in its malediction. This Erinny of revenge prays Christ and all the saints to extirpate the murderer's whole race, to shrivel it up till it passes from the earth. Then, with a sudden and vehement transition to the pathos of her own sorrow, she exclaims:—

Halla mai bista nissunu
Tumbà l'omi pe li canti?

It appears from these words that Giammatteo's enemies had killed him because they were jealous of his skill in singing. Shortly after, she curses the curate of the village, a kinsman of the murderer, for refusing

to toll the funeral bells; and, at last, all other threads of rage and sorrow being turned and knotted into one, she gives loose to her raging thirst for blood:—"If only I had a son, to train like a sleuth-hound, that he might track the murderer! Oh, if I had a son! Oh, if I had a lad!" Her words seem to choke her, and she swoons, and remains for a short time insensible. When the Bacchante of revenge awakes, it is with milder feelings in her heart. "O brother mine, Matteo! art thou sleeping? Here I will rest with thee and weep till daybreak." It is rare to find in literature so crude and intense an expression of fiery hatred as these untranslatable *vóceri* present. The emotion is so simple and so strong that it becomes sublime by mere force, and affects us with a strange pathos when contrasted with the tender affection conveyed in such terms of endearment as "my dove," "my flower," "my pheasant," "my bright painted orange," addressed to the dead. In the *vóceri* it often happens that there are several interlocutors: one friend questions and another answers, or a kinswoman of the murderer attempts to justify the deed, and is overwhelmed with deadly imprecations. Passionate appeals are made to the corpse: "Arise! Do you not hear the women cry? Stand up. Show your wounds, and let the fountains of your blood flow! Alas! he is dead; he sleeps; he cannot hear!" Then they turn again to tears and curses, feeling that no help or comfort can come from the clay-cold form. The intensity of grief finds strange language for its utterance. A girl, mourning over her father, cries:—

Mi l'hannu crucifissatu
Cume Ghiesu Cristu in croce.

Once only, in Viale's collection, does any friend of the dead remember mercy. It is an old woman, who points to the crucifix above the bier.

But all the *vóceri* are not so murderous. Several are composed for girls who died unwedded and before their time, by their mothers or companions. The language of these laments is far more tender and ornate. They praise the gentle virtues and beauty of the girl, her piety and helpful household ways. The most affecting of these dirges is that which celebrates the death of Romana, daughter of Dariola Danesi. Here is a pretty picture of the girl:—"Among the best and fairest maidens you were like a rose among flowers, like the moon among stars; so far more lovely were you than the loveliest. The youths in your presence were like lighted torches, but full of reverence; you were courteous to all, but with none familiar. In church they gazed at you, but you looked at none of them; and after mass you said, 'Mother, let us go.' Oh! who will console me for your loss? Why did the Lord so much desire you? But now you rest in heaven, all joy and smiles; for the world was not worthy of so fair a face. Oh! how far more beautiful will Paradise be now!" Then follows a piteous picture of the old bereaved mother, to whom a year will seem a thousand years, who will wander among relatives without affection, neighbours without love; and

when sickness comes will have no one to give her a drop of water, or wipe the sweat from her brow, or hold her hand in death. All that is left for her is to wait and pray for death, that she may join again her darling.

But it is now time to return from our long digression to Ajaccio itself, and to make some mention of the advantages which it offers as a winter health station to invalids. There are many who find the air of Cannes and Nice too dry and exciting, and who are surprised, when they expect a summer in the midst of February, to be greeted with winds far colder than the easterly blasts from which they fled in England. Such persons would probably benefit from a residence at Ajaccio, where, with a splendid southern sun, and a temperature dry as well as warm, there is no irritating harshness in the air, and no sharp cutting mistral. The beauty of the scenery, and the unending variety of the excursions round Ajaccio, render it a most desirable residence for those who delight in nature, and are able to take horse or carriage exercise. The accommodation, which has hitherto been very indifferent, is rapidly improving, through the unremitting labours of the English physician, Dr. Ribton, and a German colleague, who are doing all in their power to render Ajaccio as comfortable as Cannes or Mentone. One great attraction to this place is the cheapness of lodging, food, and locomotion. During the last few winters Cannes and Mentone have become as dear as Nice, which means a little dearer than London or Paris. It is only by vigorous competition and by the multiplication of health stations in other parts that the preposterous overcharges of the Cornice hotels can possibly be beaten down.

Ajaccio does not, indeed, as yet offer many advantages of society and city life to foreigners. But visitors bring these with them; and in course of time begin to complain that they get too much of them. At present the attractions and ornaments of the town consist of a good public library, Cardinal Fesch's large but indifferent collection of pictures, two monuments to Napoleon, and Napoleon's house. It will always be the chief pride of Ajaccio that she gave birth to the great Emperor. Close to the harbour, in a public square by the sea-beach, stands an equestrian statue of the conqueror surrounded by his four brothers on foot. They are all attired in Roman fashion, and are turned seaward, to the west, as if to symbolize the emigration of this family to conquer Europe. There is something ludicrous and forlorn in the stiffness of the group,—something even pathetic, when we think how Napoleon gazed seaward, westward, from another island, no longer on horseback, no longer laurel-crowned, an unthroned, unseated conqueror, on St. Helena. His father's house stands close by. An old Italian waiting-woman, who had been long in the service of the Murats, keeps it and shows it. She has the manners of a lady, and can tell many stories of the various members of the Buonaparte family. Those who fancy that Napoleon was born in a mean dwelling of poor parents will be surprised to find so much space and elegance in these apartments. Of course his family was not rich by comparison with the riches of French or English

nobles. But for Corsicans they were well to do, and their house has an air of antique dignity. The chairs of the entrance saloon have been literally stripped of their coverings by enthusiastic visitors: the horse-hair stuffing underneath protrudes itself with a sort of comic pride, as if protesting that it came to be so tattered in an honourable service. Some of the furniture seems new; but many old presses inlaid with marbles, agates and lapis lazuli, such as Italian families preserve for generations, have an air of respectable antiquity about them. Nor is there any doubt that the young Napoleon led his minuets beneath the stiff girandoles of the formal dancing-room. There, too, in a dark back-chamber, is the bed in which he was born. At its foot is a photograph of the present Prince Imperial sent by the Empress Eugenie, who, when she visited the room, wept much—*pianse molto* (to use the old lady's phrase)—at seeing the place where such lofty destinies began. On the wall of the same room is a portrait of Napoleon himself as the young general of the Republic—with the citizen's unkempt hair, the fierce fire of the Revolution in his eyes, a frown upon his forehead, lips compressed, and quivering nostrils; also one of his mother, the pastille of a handsome woman, with Napoleonic eyes and brows and nose, but with a vacant simpering mouth. Perhaps the provincial artist knew not how to seize the expression of this feature, the most difficult to draw. For we cannot fancy that Letizia had lips without the firmness or the fulness of a majestic nature.

The whole first storey of this house belonged to the Buonaparte family. The windows look out partly on a little court and partly on narrow streets. It was, no doubt, the memory of this home that made Napoleon, when emperor, design schemes for the good of Corsica—schemes that might have brought him more honour than many conquests, but which he had no time or leisure to carry out. On St. Helena his mind often reverted to them, and he would speak of the gummy odours of the macchi wafted from the hill-sides to the sea-shore.

Jacob Omnium.

A FEW weeks since a life ended which was so usefully employed for the public good as to demand some such memorial as we propose to set up for it. It was an uneventful life, giving much more material for the critic than the chronicler. Matthew James Higgins was the son of Matthew Higgins, Esq., of Benown, county Westmeath, who married Miss Baillie, cousin of the Right Hon. Henry Baillie, of Red Castle, Inverness-shire. His son, Matthew James, was born at Benown in December, 1810, and was educated at Eton and New College, Oxford. In 1850 he married Emily, fifth daughter of Sir Henry Tichborne, and widow of John Benett, Esq. He died on the 14th of August last, his wife surviving him, with a son and two daughters. Little could be added to that meagre chronicle, and nothing of public interest. We are concerned not so much with Matthew Higgins as with Jacob Omnium.

When Mr. Higgins was first moved to write for the public is not quite clear; but it must be at least twenty-five years ago since he made certain contributions to the *New Monthly Magazine*, which at once attracted attention. Some of these sketches their author afterwards collected and printed for private circulation; and in so doing furnished his friends with a handy-volume of evidence that he was of the number of born essayists, and not of those who achieve literary distinction by prudence and practice. His first efforts—he himself had no over-weening opinion of them—are in essential particulars as good as his last. They have not quite the same power, nor do they exhibit that perfect discipline of word and clause which afterwards gave to “J. O.’s” columns their peculiar *military* force, and made of him, in attack, the most formidable penman in English journalism. But if these his earlier efforts are so far lacking in the comparison, what they do lack are only such advantages as may be acquired. They have at the same time all the natural adroitness, all the natural humour and penetration of his later writings; and they show beside that what he particularly excelled in—the implication of the most pungent meaning in a demure simplicity of statement—was not an acquirement, but a gift: a remarkable gift, and one that is rarely bestowed on an Englishman. Altogether, there is in these sketches the style—the touch, the tone, the happy measure of thought and word—which distinguishes the real literary faculty from all imitations, however worthy. Of observation, too, or rather of discrimination (for that is generally what is meant by the other word), there is abundant proof. It is therefore probably true, as his biographer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* has said, that but for his predilection

for the topics of the day, Jacob Omnium might long ago have secured a place amongst the standard writers of English. But capability and disposition are different things; and though Mr. Higgins had remarkable literary faculties, and used them as if he respected them, he had no merely literary ambition. He never wrote to write an article; he could not have written simply to produce a book, however great his confidence that it would be a clever and lasting one. Thus what is happily called his predilection for the topics of the day appears to have been his only stimulus to write at all. Even these earlier essays, which might naturally be expected to display the simply literary aspirations of a young writer, have the purpose, and the same *kind* of purpose, which he afterwards pushed with such excellent effect in the pages of the *Times*, of this Magazine, of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Thus the first of them, "Jacob Omnium, M.P., the Merchant Prince," might have been written after the commercial panic of 1866, in castigation of our own fraudulent directors, and in derision of their splendid vulgarities, their bumptious benevolences, and the fatal facility with which they impose upon people who would be shocked to imagine themselves easy to dazzle or delude. "Mr. Z. the Eminent Horse-Dealer," and "Horse-Buyers and Horse-Dealers," have precisely the purpose of much of "J. O.'s" later work; and "The Wild Sports of Middlesex" is a perfect example of the way in which his lively humour, and an irony that dropped like milk and bit like vitriol, were employed to shame vicious follies out of existence. "The Father of the Fancy," and "Animal Magnetism"—the latter a charmingly humorous little paper—have also for motive that impatience of cruelty to animals which he constantly manifested to the end of his life: in fine, of the nine brief papers comprised in the volume, half-a-dozen are obviously not so much the efforts of a literary aspirant as of a social reformer. From this it would appear that we probably lost little by Mr. Higgins's predilection for the topics of the day; while our gain in him was that same predilection, exercised with a literary skill rarely excelled in our time. The satisfaction of pricking a bubble, the pleasure of redressing a wrong or abolishing an abuse, called faculties into play which otherwise might have been seldom employed, if at all; and it was a distinction that marked his whole character in various ways that he had as ready a hand for a little abuse as for a great one.

For Jacob Omnium was often engaged in weightier affairs than are generally included in the phrase "topics of the day;" and he did other good work besides what may be done in reviews and newspapers. Thus when the Irish famine was at its worst, Mr. Higgins was amongst those who took the risks of turmoil, of fever, of over-work amongst the wretched creatures who lay dying and dead in hundreds of villages; and there are those who remember still what industry, what sagacity, temper, and kindness he exhibited in that trying time and in those dreadful scenes. To which let us add, as an illus-

tration of his readiness to help in all things, little or great, that at one time he got himself made a parish guardian, in order to try what might be done by honest and quick-witted gentlemen in that post, instead of abandoning the management of parochial affairs and the poor to tradesmen often ignorant and indifferent, and just as often attracted to parish work by parish jobbing alone. Another significant fact is that for many years and till quite recently he was a contented employer of negroes who were contented with their master. From his father he inherited estates in Demerara; these he took care to visit more than once; and he so ordered affairs, or affairs were so beneficently ordered for him, that his relations with his black servants abroad (overseers and all, they were of one colour) were as comfortable as those with his white servants at home: so he always declared whenever the question of negro labour was discussed in his presence. How far he was fitted for the public service in Parliament, his defeat in 1847 when he stood for Westbury on Peelite principles, and his determination to make no second effort for a seat, leave us imperfect means of judging. Certainly he had many advantages for a Parliamentary career. He was rich and well connected, as the phrase is; he had a magnificent presence, engaging manners, admirable temper; and his voice was singularly clear and sweet, with the very note of frankness and courage in it. Whether he had the special faculty of making speeches is unknown; but if remarkable lucidity in conversation, an apt and racy choice of language, sparkle in anecdote, terseness in narrative, be acceptable evidence, then there is reason to think that Jacob Omnium might have been an efficient and even powerful debater. And all these important attributes were added to the sagacity, the inquiry, the wit and force and polish so abundantly displayed in his writings. With such a character, and such predilections, and such advantages, it seems scarcely questionable that he would not only have "succeeded" in Parliament, but would have done enormous good there. He himself, perhaps, doubted whether his habit of lashing out against anything that to him was a proveable folly or wrong might not bring upon himself too much personal discomfort in the crowded area of St. Stephen's: all the more that in such matters he was utterly careless of persons, and could only have been subdued by party considerations to his own mortification. Besides, men in office have no love for such critics and reformers as are mercilessly regardless of the inconvenience they may cause to particular men or sets of men, when once their minds are bent upon the exposure of an abuse or the punishment of an evil; and of such critics and reformers "J. O." certainly was one. The same unflinching temper, joined to a special aptitude and delight for getting at particulars, would probably have made him intolerable to the gentlemen of more than one public department which demands precisely such a head as his; nor would his inflexibility have been less irritating for the unflinching courtesy of language and manner which distinguished him in personal discussion, as much as his adroitness did. But though he would have created much discomfort amongst poor-law officials, for

instance, hatred amongst the noble army of guardians, and dread in the minds of Treasury whips, who cannot endure to have parish people offended, he would have made of that department of administration a very different and far less scandalous thing than late years have shown it to be. For Matthew Higgins was by no means what is called a Quixotic reformer. He was as safe as he was courageous. It would be as much a mistake to think of him as a sentimentalist as to talk of him as a pigmy. He was, in fact, an eminently business-like man—cautious, painstaking, and capable of dealing candidly with facts as well as with men. Without such qualities, indeed, he could never have earned so thoroughly as he did the peculiar praise bestowed upon him, by one who obviously knew him well, in the journal already quoted:—"In the brilliant and versatile writer, with half-a-dozen controversies on his hands, not a few of a large circle of acquaintance found a friend in need, a counsellor in difficulty, a comforter in affliction. His habit of looking below the surface and getting to the bottom of things, and his long practice in weighing evidence of all kinds, often enabled him to settle disputes and effect reconciliations." Let any one acquainted with the world ask himself what manner of man is commonly chosen by those amongst whom he lives to settle disputes and effect reconciliations, and he will find in the answer our own description of Mr. Higgins's character; though of course, those with whom he had the misfortune to differ, and who generally got very much the worst of the difference, may be inclined to dispute its accuracy. Such a man must have tact, shrewdness, benevolence, candour, and, above all, must have succeeded in convincing his friends of a clear uncompromising sense of justice. And of such material was Matthew Higgins made up;—this, together with his humour and his intellectual force and grace, was what we all so long admired as "Jacob Omnium."

He was a young man when he commenced the kind of work he was born to, and he carried it on with unabated vigour and pleasure to the last days of life. His mind was as fresh, as strong, as alert at fifty-eight as it had been at forty. In the long interval between his first appearance in the *New Monthly Magazine* and his association with a knot of kindred spirits in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he wrote first for the *Morning Chronicle*, speedily making himself felt there. Afterwards, for more than twenty years, he was one of the most constant, and certainly one of the most powerful, contributors to the *Times*: indeed, it is doubtful whether that journal could boast of another mind so influential or so useful for its nobler purposes. He also wrote, as we have said, for the *Edinburgh Review*; and his contributions to this Magazine were frequent. The good that he accomplished in these various ways was very great. We have only to recall his various signatures—"Jacob Omnium," "J. O.," "Paterfamilias," "Civilian," "West Londoner," "A Belgravian Mother," "A Thirsty Soul," "A Mother of Six," "John Barleycorn," "Providus,"—and a dozen victories over folly, cruelty, disorder, jobbery, and all manner

of mal-administration and abuse, are at once remembered. His first achievement of importance was the abolition of the Palace Court; his latest a most necessary and complete revolution of idea as to what our great public schools are and ought to be. In the interval there was scarcely a department of Government that had not given him occasion for unsparing criticism; which rarely failed of its aim; and he found many a little evil in our social affairs for exposure and abolition. It is very significant of his power and address that Mr. Higgins succeeded in arresting attention as well under a strange signature as under one that was familiar. We all know what the prestige of a name and of success means in matters of this kind. Over and over again Mr. Higgins proved that no such prestige was necessary for him. As soon as under the name of "Civilian" he opened fire upon War Office and Horse Guards, public attention was fixed upon the quarrel, and "Civilian" was as much applauded as "J. O." had been. So it was when he wrote under the signature "West Londoner;" and so "Paterfamilias" ranged behind him at once a degree of public support which forced inquiry, spite of the sturdiest opposition, into the condition and management of our public schools. It is true, no doubt, that to the initiated in London, to officials, journalists, and club men, Jacob Omnium was revealed under every disguise; but the mass of the public have no such discrimination:—they simply recognized the sound sense, courage, and justice of "Civilian" or "Paterfamilias," cheered him on to the attack accordingly, and in most cases loyally carried him through to the achievement of his end.

At length, and after twenty years of intimate labour with the chiefs of the *Times*, he quarrelled with that journal. No: that journal quarrelled with him. There arose an occasion of fatal necessity, in which the *Times*, in order to perform with sufficient completeness a change of opinion imperatively demanded by the humour of the day, had to fall foul of "J. O." himself, scorning him as a malignant slanderer for what had been cordially printed in its own pages. Hurt and astonished, Mr. Higgins asked for an explanation; the answer was equally rude and astonishing; and Jacob Omnium had no more to do with the *Times*. All this arose out of the famous Crawley case, in which it may be that Mr. Higgins was wrong, though it is impossible that the *Times* should be quite irreproachable, seeing that it took *both* sides of the controversy. But whether the *Times* was first wrong and then right, or first right and then wrong, about that noisy and most suspicious matter, its conduct towards "J. O." was entirely indefensible. As to the merits of the Crawley Court-Martial case itself we express no opinion, and as to Mr. Higgins's part in it maintain this only: that few men are always right in matters of opinion; that "J. O." was not of the miraculous few, probably; but that he approached no subject without as careful an examination of the circumstances as he could make, or with any other motives than those of honesty and justice.

From what is known of him as a public writer, it might fairly be

inferred that Mr. Higgins was a very busy man; bustling, perhaps; or what is called energetic in aspect, carriage, and manner. In fact, he was precisely the contrary of this. Above all things a man of society, he very contentedly spent much of his time as such men do; at his club, in the drawing-room, reading, riding, lounging in the company of his friends; and wherever he appeared, there was seen a well-bred, handsome Englishman, who used to be known abroad, so little bellicose or cynical was he, as the "Gentle Giant." As has been said of him already, "there were few pursuits in which English gentlemen commonly indulge with which he had not some acquaintance or sympathy. He loved literature, art, society, politics, and sport;" and it might have been added that he found almost as much pleasure in one as in another. He had a fine taste, a keen discernment for the fitting and the proper, and he knew well, and well knew how to observe, the measure of respect due to others. In short, he was in all his social relations what his constant friend Thackeray would have called a courteous and honest gentleman.

Such as he was, he died on the 14th of August of the present year, the fifty-eighth of his existence. His decease was sudden in this regard, that it was quite unexpected from the general condition of his health. For some time, indeed, he had been troubled with rheumatism, and it was noticed by some whose regard for him made them particularly observant, that he showed now and then a certain depression of spirit, not altogether to be explained by the apparent state of his health. Maybe he recurred to the common experience that men of his gigantic stature—he was six feet eight inches high—do not often attain to very old age; and that this gave importance in his mind to what otherwise would have seemed an inconsiderable derangement of health. And up to this time, too, he had maintained a remarkable degree of vigour. His hair had become almost white—at fifty-eight—but his clear grey eyes, the freshness of his face, his free gait, and, more than all, the unhampered play of his thought and the sparkle of his language, were such tokens as are found in men twenty years his junior: and not always then. Gigantic as was his form, it had not to the last any sign of infirmity. On the contrary, it had so much the look of youth—of youth even—that its fine proportions would have graced a man of thirty. In this apparent vigour of body, in this unquestionable freshness and vigour of mind, he died—through incautious bathing during the dangerous heats of our last summer.

Having come to that statement, we have little heart even for panegyric, well deserved as it is. He died: and the *Times* recorded his death in three or four simple lines, sternly repressive of every symptom of regret.

